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# A Rhetorical Analysis of 1 Cor 5-11:1 in Light of the Social Lives of the Corinthians

Written by Sin Pan Daniel Ho

March 2012

Supervisor: Professor James G. Crossley

A Partial Fulfillment for the Doctor of Philosophy.  
Department of Biblical Studies. University of Sheffield

This study offers a new interpretation of 1 Cor 5—11:1 from a social identity approach. The goal is to investigate and analyse the inner logic of Paul in these six chapters from the ears of the Corinthian correspondence. It takes into account the Jewish tradition inherited from Paul and daily social lives of the audience. Through the analysis of the literary structure of 1 Cor 5-11:1, research on social implications of Satanic language in ancient Jewish literature, rhetorical analysis of intertextual echoes of Scripture and Christ language in 1 Cor 5-11:1 in light of the social values prevalent in the urban city of Roman Corinth, it is argued that Paul has consistently indoctrinated new values for the audience to uphold which are against the main stream of social values in the surrounding society throughout 1 Cor 5-11:1. Paul does not engage in issues of internal schism per se, but rather in the distinctive values insiders should uphold so as to be recognisable by outsiders in their everyday social lives. While church is neither a sectarian nor an accommodating community, it should maintain constant social contact with the outsiders so as to bring the gospel of Christ to them. In addition, the social lives of the insiders should live out some radical values that could challenge the existing shared social values prevalent in the urban city Corinth. Those new values are mainly based on Scripture, ancient Jewish literature and the implications of the new social identity of the church defined by Jesus Christ. As a result, the logical flow, unitary design and coherence of 1 Cor 5—11:1 become more apparent.

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## INTRODUCTION

Whenever scholars try to show the inconsistencies of Paul in his writing, 1 Cor 5—11:1 is often cited as evidence. The conclusion of Dale Martin in his interpretation of 1 Corinthians, *The Corinthian Body*,<sup>1</sup> is representative of this position:

I am not so convinced. I believe it quite possible indeed, probable that with respect to several of the issues discussed in this book, Paul did not win the day. In some cases, after all, he was arguing a rather weak case. For example, it is hard to see how Paul can insist that sexual intercourse between a Christian man and a prostitute pollutes the pneuma of Christ (Chapter 7 above) and simultaneously argue that the holiness of Christ's body works the other way in the case of mixed marriages: that the unbelieving spouse, rather than polluting the Christian partner, experiences a sort of "reverse contagion," being made holy by contact with the sanctified body of the believing spouse (Chapter 8). It would not surprise me at all if Paul's disputants at Corinth found his arguments here unpersuasive.<sup>2</sup>

Numerous examples of "apparent contradictions" can be found in 1 Cor 5—11:1, making Paul's arguments unpersuasive to critical readers like Dale Martin. When Paul makes statement A, it is highly possible for critical readers to find a counter-statement ~A. For instance, while Paul argues in 1 Cor 8:9-10 and 10:24-27 that eating idol food itself is not wrong (statement A), he infers explicitly from the failure of the Israelites in the wilderness in the past that eating idol-food in the temple itself is a grave sin in 1 Cor 10:1-22 (statement ~A). As a result, many moral instructions of Paul in these six chapters are deemed unpersuasive.

However, we can argue that the coherent logic of 1 Cor 5—11:1, if any, has not yet been discovered. In my opinion, whether Paul's letters are logical is subject to interpretation and is not a fact per se. It leaves much scope for further exploration.

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<sup>1</sup> I follow his first suggestion to the readers that *The Corinthian Body* is primarily an interpretation of 1 Corinthians. See Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), xi.

<sup>2</sup> Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 251.

Most scholars hold a different view. Instead of linking and analysing different paragraphs together as a compositional unity and looking for a logical flow behind them, they have assumed the discrepancy and endeavoured to account for it. One traditional approach is proposing various “partition theories”: cutting the texts into different pieces and regarding the final form of 1 Corinthians as a composition of several letters of Paul.<sup>3</sup>

One major weakness of this approach is its lack of textual evidence. The Greek text of 1 Corinthians is uniformly preserved and transmitted in various text-traditions. It renders these partition theories susceptible to doubt.<sup>4</sup> Be that as it may, this approach cannot answer a crucial question: why did the final editor put them together in such an ‘inconsistent’ way? In other words, if we shift the questions about inconsistency from Paul to the final editor: the reasons why the final editor juxtaposes the pieces in such a self-contradictory way, no satisfactory answers can address the question from works adopting this approach. First Corinthians would have still been left fragmentary.

Another commonly adopted approach is the situational approach: Paul addresses different specific problems raised in the church. I coin it as the “Corinthian slogan” approach because Paul seeks to rebuke their faults through addressing their various slogans. 1 Cor 1:10 is usually taken as the thematic statement of this approach. Scholars are free to reconstruct conflicting social sub-groups within this small Corinthian church who usually advocate values and ideologies contradictory to others’. Thus, scholars often envisage two pairs or one pair of conflicting groups in the Corinthian correspondence.

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<sup>3</sup> For a comprehensive survey of this partition approach, see Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 36-39. Thiselton’s summary of the five points made by Collins in his commentary pp.36-37 has missed a number of important points that Collins intends to convey. See Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians* (SP 7; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), 10-14, for his survey of the history of development of the partition approach. Cf. Margaret Mary Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 2, n.5 and 3, n.6.

<sup>4</sup> For a complete list of codex and manuscripts of all Greek copies of 1 Corinthians, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Yale Bible 32; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 60-63. The whole Greek text of 1 Cor has been preserved and transmitted in three text-traditions.

For instance, many scholars assume that 1 Cor 5-6 and 1 Cor 7 are addressed to the libertine group and the group of sexual asceticism respectively. 5:1-3 and 6:12-20 are addressed to the libertine group. This group embraces the incestuous man without taking any punishment against him; in 6:12-20, this same group holds the slogan “all things are lawful for me”(6:12a) and does not regard visiting prostitutes as morally wrong. Thus, Paul rebukes their libertines’ stance in 6:12-20. But in 1 Cor 7, there is another group advocating an opposite view which is reflected in the slogan: “it is good for a man not to touch a woman.”(7:1) This ascetic group goes to another extreme and abstains from any sexual relations, including sexual relations within marriage. Thus Paul corrects them and encourages them to marry, claiming that a married couple should have sexual intercourse with one’s spouse on a regular basis except in certain circumstances in 7:1-7. These two groups in Corinth explain the opposing views of Paul towards sexual intercourse in 6:12-20 and 7:1-7: discouraging in one circumstance and encouraging it in another situation. Thus, the inconsistency of Paul is explained by his pastoral advice of various groups holding opposite values. Paul’s purpose is to bring them into reconciliation and unity. Likewise, the “apparent contradictions” in eating idol food in 1 Cor 8-10 is explained in a similar way: the neutral position shown in 1 Cor 8 is Paul’s affirmation of the position of a strong group within the Corinthian church while 1 Cor 10 is Paul’s serious warnings to the weak group.

This “Corinthian slogan” approach is best summed up in Margaret Mitchell’s words:

In fact, what many scholars have regarded as hopeless inconsistency by Paul in chapters 5-7 (and 8-10) of 1 Corinthians may very well be understood when all of 1 Corinthians is regarded as Paul’s argument for Corinthian unity. His “inconsistency” lies in his rhetorical strategy by which he agrees, as far as he possibly can, with the positions on both sides of the issues, so as to appease both and alienate neither, while at the same time calling all to reconciliation.<sup>5</sup>

From the outset, this approach is far better than the previous partition theory because it seems to have provided the answer to resolve the inconsistencies in 1 Cor 5-11:1. A nuanced examination, however, shows that this approach brings up more exegetical problems than

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<sup>5</sup> Margaret Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 236. Cf. Mitchell, n.283 in p.236; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 460-2; Christian Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (THKNT 7; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1996), 125.

those it resolves. First, it distracts our attention from Paul's own intention to the extravagant reconstruction of situations of the Corinthian correspondence. As a result, the point Paul intends to argue in the text is obscured. The interpretive focus shifts to the unwarranted imaginary situation of the audience within the church. Alister Scott May has pointed out the apparent weaknesses of this approach:

...the division of Paul's target audience...into libertines and ascetics also serves to hamper an appreciation of Paul's thematic treatment of sex...The danger is that, in stressing the situational nature of Paul's letter, we end up by contending that the text tells us more about the Corinthians' views on sex than about its author's own concerns....we must assume that Paul counters whatever Corinthian notions he views as erroneous by asserting his own position, largely in his own words.<sup>6</sup>

To put it simply, how do you know that those proposed specific groups / issues exist within the Corinthian church? For instance, with regard to the libertine group and ascetic group that are hypothetically constructed as issues in 1 Cor 5-6 and 1 Cor 7, May, from his solid research of the historical context, not only convincingly refutes the existence of libertinism in the Gnostic group in the first century, he also points out the lack of historical evidence for the coexistence of libertinism and asceticism: "no historical parallel can be established for what is postulated at Corinth—libertinism and asceticism coexisting in the same (small?) community."<sup>7</sup>

Besides criticism from external evidence, Michael Goulder has rightly pointed out the internal evidence against this libertine hypothesis. Goulder observes that it is the style of Paul to shame those who are responsible for their wrongdoings. But no such specific address can be found in 6:12-20. Moreover, Paul did not discipline those who visited prostitutes according to his own principle in 5:9-13.<sup>8</sup> This comes to a reasonable conclusion that Paul

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<sup>6</sup> Alistair Scott May, *'The Body for the Lord': Sex and Identity in 1 Corinthians 5-7* (JSNTSup 278; London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 150.

<sup>7</sup> May, *'The Body for the Lord'*, 94. Cf. Michael D. Goulder, "LIBERTINES? (1 COR. 5-6)," *NovT* 41.4 (1999): 334-48. [p.337]

<sup>8</sup> Goulder, "LIBERTINES? (1 COR. 5-6)," 342-344. Cf. May, *'The Body for the Lord'*, 95-97.



may actually address issues in 6:12-20 that are radically different from those in 5:1-8, which rocks the very assumption of the libertine hypothesis.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, this approach of reconstruction of various groups within the Corinthian church is now under fire by those who criticise it as “mirror-reading.” Although there are differences between reasonable and unreasonable mirror-reading, mirror-reading—reconstructing the situation of the audience only by the words of Paul— is subject to serious scrutiny.<sup>10</sup> In the case of Corinth, we do not have any solid evidence about those complex conflicting issues within the Corinthian church. This lack of either textual or historical evidence regarding the reconstruction of various conflict scenarios, does little to sustain their claims.

I contend that the shortcomings of the above readings of 1 Corinthians are due to their assumptions of inconsistencies in 1 Cor 5-11:1 and within the Pauline corpus in general. Instead of building up further reading on the shaky assumption of the discrepancies of Paul, I argue that there is coherence within Paul’s rhetoric in these six chapters.

This study offers a new interpretation of 1 Cor 5—11:1. The goal is to investigate and analyse the inner logic of Paul in these six chapters from the ears of the Corinthian correspondence. It takes into account the Jewish tradition inherited from Paul and daily social lives of the audience. Based on the narrative in Acts 18, I assume that the majority of Corinthian Christians are Gentile new believers from the city of Corinth. Paul had taught them the Jewish scripture and the story of Jesus Christ for eighteen months. Recent scholarship on classical studies about the social lives and social ethos of the Corinthians is another important frame of reference in this study. Like other urban people, new Christians

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<sup>9</sup> This same-theology-two-extreme-practices hypothesis was popular and influential to subsequent Corinthian scholarship. This notion was first proposed by Lütgert with the theology of enthusiasts’ zeal for freedom and devaluation of the physical body. Besides Alistair Scott May, Will Deming has given a faithful summary as well as a convincing rebuke against this notion of libertine and ascetic groups coexisting within Corinthian church. For his survey of the history of this interpretation theory, see Will Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy : The Hellenistic Background of I Corinthians 7* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 17-21; for his critique, see Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 21-28.

<sup>10</sup> For instances of unreasonable mirror reading, see Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, n.156 in p.55, and the imaginary division and debate between the strong group and weak group on issues such as litigation court, marriage, food offered to idols, charismatic gifts, resurrection of body, etc. in Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 38-136.

in those days still upheld some values prevalent in their social lives and their participating social groups. It is plausible that Paul reminds new Christians of their difference from the outside world.

I observe that whenever Satan language and echoes of scripture are mentioned in these six chapters, they are often mentioned in the context of Paul's explicit solemn warnings to insiders / deviant insiders (5:1-5; 7:5; 10:19-21) and his explicit differentiation of insiders from outsiders (5:9-13; 6:1-5, 9-11, 16-20; 8:4-6; 10:6-11, 26-31) respectively. Again, Christ language is often mentioned in the context of insider-outsider difference in 1 Cor 7 (7:12-17, 22-35, 39). These preliminary observations lead me to inquire into these three areas: Satan language in the Jewish tradition inherited by Paul, rhetorical purposes of echoes of scriptures and Christ language in these six chapters.

In addition, I am particularly inspired by the study of Judith M. Lieu on Christian identity formation of early churches. Her notion of designating early churches as "textual communities" is intriguing:

So, we have already described the early Christian communities as to a high degree 'textual communities', centred around and shaped by the interpretation of particular texts....It has been the constructions of identity by the texts with which we have been concerned...yet also with the conviction that it was through its texts that early Christianity, as we know it, took shape.<sup>11</sup>

Her study focuses mainly on the formation of Christian identity since the end of the first century and the particular texts are not confined only to Scripture. Yet, her study stimulated me to investigate if Paul forms the distinctive social identity of the Corinthian church through his interpretation of certain texts in Scripture and ancient Jewish literature. The results are fruitful and surprising. The logical flow, unitary design and coherent theme of these six chapters become more apparent.

In the light of the above study, *my main thesis is that the theme of 1 Cor 5-11:1 is Paul's exhortation to the Corinthian church for radical changes of their social values corresponding to their new identity "in Christ"*. More specially, Paul consistently

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<sup>11</sup> Judith Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Greco-Roman World* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2004), 300-1.

addresses the relation of the church (insiders) and the urban city culture (outsiders) surrounding the church and highlights that the critical difference between insiders and outsiders lies not in language, social class or the degree of social contact, but in the social values upheld by insiders which should be radically different from those of the outsiders. While church is neither a sectarian nor an accommodating community, it should maintain constant social contact with the outsiders so as to bring the gospel of Christ to them. In addition, the social lives of the insiders should live out some radical values that could challenge the existing shared social values prevalent in the urban city Corinth. As a result, these critical differences in values should be embodied in the social relations of Christ-followers and these changes should be observable by outsiders. It is argued in this thesis that this is a coherent theme of 1 Cor 5—11:1 and is possibly one prominent theme in the whole of 1 Corinthians and the Pauline corpus as well.

# Chapter 1

## Unifying Theme of 1 Cor 5-11:1: Past Contributions and Limitations

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### 1.1 Jewish Sin and Holiness

After the milestone work of E.P. Sanders' *Paul and Palestine Judaism*,<sup>12</sup> scholars have discovered more about the influence of the Jewish tradition on Paul. Moreover, 1 Cor 4:6 and 10: 11 show that Paul does retain some moral instructions of the OT to the Gentile Christians. Thus, some scholars have attempted to interpret Paul's letters in the light of the Jewish tradition.

One important Jewish concept that relates to our study is the idea of purity. The concept of purity is repeated throughout 1 Cor 5:1—11:1. Purity language or images such as "unleavened" (5:7), "washed and sanctified" (6:11; 7:14), "temple of the Holy Spirit" (6:19), "unclean" (7:14), "holy" (7:14, 34), "sin against" (8:12), "altar" (9:13), "baptised" (10:2), etc., permeate these six chapters. The concept of purity in Judaism of the first century is most probably shared by Paul and so it helps us understand Paul's purity language in 1 Corinthians. Two Jewish scholars who merit our attention for understanding purity in ancient Judaism include Jonathan Klawans and Christine E. Hayes.

The main thesis of Klawans' work, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, is that there are two kinds of impurity expressed in the Hebrew Bible: ritual and moral impurity. While ritual impurity as indicated in Lev 15 is not sinful and the sources of impurities are natural, unavoidable, contagious but not permanently defiling, moral impurity as indicated in Lev 18, on the other hand, is sinful and morally defiles the sinner, the land and the sanctuary. Moreover, the defilement effect is permanent (unless God intervenes).<sup>13</sup> Sources of moral impurities are the three grave sins in the Hebrew Bible: idolatry, sexual sin and bloodshed. They are characterised by the notion of defilement of the land which should be taken as having

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<sup>12</sup> E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

<sup>13</sup> Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2000), 22-7.

a literal instead of metaphorical meaning.<sup>14</sup> For if the land can become holy, it can also be defiled in terms of degradation of status. Moreover, the final outcome for the people who committed moral impurities was expulsion from the land of Israel.<sup>15</sup>

Klawans then proceeds to argue that such a distinction is helpful in understanding Lev 18:24-30 where the emphasis is not on instructions concerning preparation for proper entrance of the sanctuary (ritual impurity) but grave sins against Yahweh. These are serious warnings that the people of God should avoid these things, while ritual impurity is usually unavoidable. The effect of moral defilement on the land and the sinner should be taken literally.<sup>16</sup> Second, from his tracing of the development of ritual and moral impurities in the Jewish literature of subsequent generations, Klawans demonstrates that his distinction can function as a “developer” to characterise different sects within Judaism. For instance, Qumran identifies ritual impurity with moral impurity,<sup>17</sup> while Tannaitic literature compartmentalises them. In other words, sinners are rejected for moral reasons and not for ritual impurity;<sup>18</sup> Philo takes ritual defilement as analogous to moral defilement and gives priority to the latter.<sup>19</sup> There is further development of these two impurities with further ideas on sources of moral impurities (e.g. all kinds of sin by Philo) and their effects (e.g. withdrawal of the presence of God in Tannaitic tradition).

In relation to the New Testament, Klawans argues that his distinction of ritual and moral impurity helps NT scholarship in both negative and positive ways. Negatively, it reveals common misunderstandings of NT scholarship concerning the Jewish purity system. Positively, Klawans argues that John the Baptist, Jesus and Paul stress only the significance of

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<sup>14</sup> See Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 26 which summarises five important differences of these two kinds of impurity.

<sup>15</sup> Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 30.

<sup>16</sup> Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 32-6.

<sup>17</sup> Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 49.

<sup>18</sup> Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 94, 131-133. “Every time the tannaim insist that sin produces moral impurity, they are simultaneously emphasizing that sin does *not* produce ritual impurity. Each of the tannaitic traditions is carefully constructed so as to avoid any confusion between ritual and moral impurity.” [p.133]

<sup>19</sup> Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 64-6.

moral impurity, not ritual impurity. Paul connotes only moral impurity whenever he mentions impurity and thus pays no attention to ritual impurity.<sup>20</sup>

Klawans' arguments are intriguing, especially his sharp observation of the critical difference between the impurities mentioned in Lev 15 - 18. Most of his arguments are insightful and sound, especially in his use of counter-examples to unveil the shortcomings of former theories on purity. For example, in his evaluation of Mary Douglas' concept of dirt as "matter out of place", he refers to teachings about the corpse in order to sharply rebuke the over-emphasis of location in understanding ritual impurity. In his words, "[a] corpse, for instance, is ritually defiling wherever it may be, be it in a street (not the proper place for a corpse) or buried in a cemetery (the proper place for a corpse)."<sup>21</sup>

He has clarified the distinction between ritual impurity and sin. A doctrine of moral defilement originates in the Holiness Code and flows unceasingly through Second Temple literature to the time of Paul. Any argument that seeks to downplay the consequences of sexual sin, idolatry and murder in the OT will be more difficult to sustain after Klawans' work. These three sins continue to be regarded as cardinal sins and God's people should not commit them.

There are some helpful insights in Klawans' work that help us understand 1 Cor 5—11:1. First, he shows again the intimate thematic connection of 1 Cor 5-7 and 1 Cor 8—11:1. If Klawan's notion of the doctrine of moral defilement is correct, Paul likely understands this doctrine in the same way as other first century rabbis. He regards sexual sin and idol food issues in 1 Cor 5-11:1 as a matter of moral impurity. Those are sins against God, not just against Jewish traditions of propriety in worship.

Thus, Paul's serious discipline against the brother committing incest in 1 Cor 5 is not unusual if he shares this tradition of moral defilement. According to this ancient Jewish tradition, those who commit moral impurity should be expelled from the Promised Land. As the Israelites in Paul's time are already in exile, Paul may have transformed its use to inheritance of/expulsion from the Kingdom of God. This may clarify Paul's requirement of sanctification and the lasting consequence of God's people committing vice in 1 Cor 6:9-10.

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<sup>20</sup> Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 137-8.

<sup>21</sup> Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 137.



Secondly, Klawans' work may help us understand Paul's concept of the boundary of the church. Paul does not regard holiness as a wall isolating God's people from outsiders in order to keep it pure, for moral impurity is *not* contagious through social contact with immoral people. He does, however, regard holiness as a filter with which to evaluate elements from surrounding cultures, like the respiration system of a fish, in order to absorb the good and reject the bad elements to keep the body of Christ healthy. This may explain why, on the one hand, Paul gives instructions that are so counter-cultural (e.g. 6:1-11; 7:10-11; 8:10-13; 10:1-13) and on the other hand, he allows and even encourages Corinthian Christians to have regular social intercourse with unbelievers (5:9-10; 7:12-16; 9:19-23; 10:27-33).

Based on Klawans' thesis, Christine E. Hayes adds one more impurity alongside ritual and moral impurity, which is genealogical impurity. This notion is closely related to the identity formation of the Jewish people after exile. From her nuanced study of the biblical sources, she demonstrates that Gentiles, or resident aliens, were not intrinsically ritually or morally impure before the exile of the Israelites.<sup>22</sup> Resident aliens could live together with Israelites and there was some assimilation of Gentiles into Jewish society in biblical times. They could even participate in the worship of Yahweh, provided that they converted to the Jewish faith.<sup>23</sup> However, after the exile, Ezra-Nehemiah develops the notion of genealogical purity: "biological descent from full Israelite parents, undergirded by the notion of Israel as a holy seed."<sup>24</sup> It originated in Lev 21 with prohibition against mixed marriage of the priests. Ezra-Nehemiah generalised this commandment of racial purity of the priests to all Israelites and developed the notion of genealogical impurity.<sup>25</sup> The purpose was to preserve Jewish ethnic identity among the Gentiles and so the "holy seed" could be preserved and passed from one generation to another. Mixed marriage was prohibited not because it was ritually nor morally impure, but because it polluted the holy seed.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Christine E. Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud* (New York: OUP, 2002), 19-24.

<sup>23</sup> Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities*, 21-2.

<sup>24</sup> Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities*, 27.

<sup>25</sup> Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities*, 27-33.

<sup>26</sup> Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities*, 33.

In relation to the interpretation of 1 Cor 5-11:1, Hayes applies this tradition of genealogical purity to interpret the meaning of the phrase “otherwise, your children would be unclean” in 7:14:

Neither Paul nor the rabbis did away with the idea of a boundary to demarcate their respective communities from “others.” They simply broke with the genealogical emphasis of earlier Jewish groups and redefined group identity in moral-religious terms. In addition, both drew selectively on older Jewish traditions in policing their newly established group boundaries....Paul skilfully lifts this rhetoric from its genealogical context, transforming the Ezran notion of holy seed into the notion of holy flesh. The body of the believer, who abstains from defiling sexual acts, is holy. The body of the unbeliever, defiled by sexual immorality, is impure. Carnal connections between the two are an illicit combination of the holy and the impure, in which the holy flesh of the believer, and by extension the body of Christ himself, is defiled in the impure flesh of the unbeliever.<sup>27</sup>

Hayes points out the similarities between the ways of Paul and the Rabbis in maintaining ethnic identity by:

- a. Establishing a new permeable boundary: Paul transforms the notion of holy seed into the notion of holy flesh: a boundary marker defined not on a biological basis but on bodily behaviour (primarily sexual). He does not erase or spiritualise the old but simply establishes a new and more permeable boundary; similarly, the Rabbis appeal to the old Torah vision of Israel, bound by a divine Covenant, which is also a more permeable boundary.<sup>28</sup>
- b. Facilitating access into communities while barring access to undesirable outsiders (especially idolaters), thus policing group boundaries: On the one hand, Paul addresses the boundary confusion by introducing terms such as “holy” and “impure” to bar intermarriage; on the other hand, he permits existing inter-group marriages and suggests that conversion is possible for new converts to enter the community through an act of faith and abstention from immoral behaviours. The Rabbis found no problems for Jews to have intermarriage. But concerning inter-ethnic casual sexual

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<sup>27</sup> Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities*, 195.

<sup>28</sup> Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities*, 159-160.

relations, the Rabbis may propose a notion of Gentile ritual impurity to curb inter-group sexual liaisons.<sup>29</sup>

- c. Licensing outsiders to become permitted insiders through baptism (Paul) or halakhic conversion (the Rabbis).<sup>30</sup>

Hayes demonstrates the close relevance of Jewish identity formation in the Second Temple period with Paul's view of a social boundary of the church in 1 Corinthians. The formation and preservation of Jewish identity is not an issue before the exile, for they had their own land and nation. After the exile, their status was turned back to that of resident aliens among the nations, just like their ancestors in Egypt or even the Patriarchs living in Canaan. The Jewish identity was then grounded not only on the norm from their religion but also on lineage.

Although Hayes' notion of "carnal purity" is problematic (see Excursus 1), her reference to rabbinic sources is helpful in understanding 1 Cor 7:14. Rabbis in Paul's time thought that the purity status of the children of a marriage between a Canaanite father and Israelite mother corresponded to the mother's.<sup>31</sup> This may help us understand why Paul presumes the children of mixed marriages to be holy. Moreover, Hayes shows that there is a common theme between Jewish tradition and Paul on the concept of holiness: a control mechanism for regulating the behaviour of insiders, and policing the boundaries in terms of moral behaviour (see points a and b above).

The limitations of Kalwans and Hayes are also evident as they only provide references for Paul's concept of sin and holiness. It is still necessary for us to do a nuanced exegesis of 1 Cor 5-11:1 to examine the influence of the Jewish scripture and ancient Jewish literature on 1 Corinthians about holiness and social identity formation of a called-to-be-saints community.

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<sup>29</sup> Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities*, 160-161.

<sup>30</sup> Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities*, 159-163.

<sup>31</sup> Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities*, 151.

## 1.2 Condemning Sexual Immorality

The efforts of three scholars, namely Brian S. Rosner, Will Deming and O. Larry Yarbrough, in figuring out the logic of 1 Cor 5-7 command our attention. They engage directly with the texts rather than simply studying some background or related Jewish traditions about the texts.

Brian S. Rosner argues that the texts that are most helpful in understanding Paul's ethics in 1 Cor 5-7 are mainly the Jewish Scriptures, Jewish literature in the Second Temple period and rabbinic literature. He finds OT allusion in almost every verse of 1 Cor 5-7. He has argued that "the Scriptures are nevertheless a crucial and formative source for Paul's ethics...in 1 Corinthians 5-7 at least the debt to Scripture is much greater than has often been supposed."<sup>32</sup> Rosner argues that there is a strong dependence upon Scripture for his ethical instructions in 1 Cor 5-7. For instance, parallels of Paul's instructions in 1 Cor 5 and LXX Deut 23,<sup>33</sup> 1 Cor 6:1-11 and Moses appointing judges in Exodus 18/ Deut 1,<sup>34</sup> the vice list in 5:11 coincides with the six crimes mentioned in Deuteronomy which demand the sentence of "purging the evil one from your midst" (Deut 13:5; 17:3, 7; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21; 24:7). Rosner then argues that this is evidence confirming that 1 Cor 5:13b is a deliberate Deuteronomic citation and the rationale for Christian excommunication follows the legislation of Deuteronomy.<sup>35</sup>

Although I disagree with some of Rosner's conclusions regarding OT echoes, I regard him as a significant dialogue partner in looking for the OT echoes in 1 Cor 5-6.<sup>36</sup> Rosner demonstrates that the logic of Paul's ethical instructions lies primarily in the Torah, and then the Jewish scripture in general. Although he does not show the logical relation of 6:1-11 with the surrounding context on sexual immorality, and the allusions of 1 Cor 7 to the scriptural and rabbinic literature are only shown in fragmented associations without interpretation,<sup>37</sup> I am indebted to Rosner for figuring out Paul's allusions to the OT. As a result, a new coherent theme is discovered in 1 Cor 7 which shows the ongoing relation of 1 Cor 7:1-9 with 1 Cor 5-6.

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<sup>32</sup> Brian S. Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics: A Study of 1 Corinthians 5-7* (AGJU 22; Leiden : Brill, 1994; Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 24.

<sup>33</sup> Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics*, 81-83.

<sup>34</sup> Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics*, 99-108.

<sup>35</sup> Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics*, 63, 70.

<sup>36</sup> See the detailed discussion in chapter 4 of this thesis.

<sup>37</sup> Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics*, 147-76.

The second seminal work about the coherence of 1 Cor 5-7 is Will Deming's work *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of I Corinthians 7*. His fundamental tenet is that Paul does not advocate any sexual asceticism in 1 Cor 7, and instead of alluding to Scripture, he argues that Paul refers to the texts of the Stoic-Cynic marriage debate, which provide the best matrix for understanding Paul's logic and the Corinthians' position on marriage and the dialogue in 1 Cor 7.

Will Deming engages in the exegesis of the text per se, seeking to answer every tough question related to the logic and the meaning of 1 Cor 7. He points out that v.7 does not state the contrast between incontinent married and continent unmarried Christians, "but between *married* Christians who are able to forgo sexual relations and those who are not."<sup>38</sup> This clarification helps us understand the preceding v.1-6 and the significance of verse 7 as a conclusion.

His second sharp interpretation is about the relation between v.15a and v.15b. A common understanding is that the latter explains the former. However, this immediately faces the difficulty of interpreting 15c: God has called you to peace, which sounds irrelevant to the preceding discussion. Deming's suggestion, in my opinion, is a radical reinterpretation and is preferable. V.15b is the beginning of a new discourse instead of further elaboration of v.15a. Paul corrects the Corinthians' error in regarding mixed marriage as enslavement. Married men and women, even to unbelievers, are not enslaved in marriage; this marital peace of Christians with their unbelieving spouses is not enslavement but the call of God to bring salvation to them.<sup>39</sup> This interpretation is preferable because it explains why Paul further casts out the hope of saving one's unbelieving spouse in v.16. It also shows the connection, in the ensuing context vv.17-24, between the maintenance of mixed marriage and retainment of one's social status when one is called :

With regard to the issue of mixed marriages at Corinth, Paul's implied conclusion in all this is that Christians married to non-Christians are not enslaved—his initial claim in 7:15b. These Christians are in fact no more enslaved to their spouses than other Christians are slaves to earthly masters, something which Paul has shown to be a matter of indifference. Any attempt by these Christians to shake off their supposed yoke of

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<sup>38</sup> Will Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 125.

<sup>39</sup> Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 146-52.

slavery by divorcing a non-Christian spouse must be viewed as a rejection of God's grace and at the same time the subjection of themselves to true slavery—that of the spirit.<sup>40</sup>

This exegetical insight of linking marriage with slavery is significant for the present study to investigate further the parallel between 1 Cor 7 and 1 Cor 9 (see section 2.1.4).

The exegetical efforts of Deming are commendable, but the limitations of his work on studying the coherence of 1 Cor 7 are also evident. First, his suggested new interpretation of each paragraph of 1 Cor 7 sometimes raises new “apparent contradictions.” One example is the relation between 7:10-24 and vv. 25-28. According to Deming's interpretation, Paul in 7:10-24 urges the Christians with mixed marriages to maintain their marital status *in spite of* any adverse circumstance.<sup>41</sup> Then in vv.25-28, he may be following the Stoic argument against marriage, namely, it is not fitting to get married in adverse circumstances because those “circumstances” may prevent one from fulfilling one's responsibilities to the spouse. The only difference between Paul and the Stoics is the inclusion of the concept of sin.<sup>42</sup> A question naturally arises: why does Paul urge the singles to remain single in vv.25-28 *because of* objective adverse circumstances, while urging the Christians in mixed marriages to remain *in spite of* any adverse circumstance? Deming's interpretation seems to make Paul arbitrary regarding his agreement/disagreement on Stoic values on marriage.

Secondly, Deming seems not to have addressed the question why Paul presumes some of the virgins as having been married in v.27, as married virgins seem to be a self-contradictory term. If it refers to spiritual marriage, then it violates Paul's teachings of regular sexual intercourse within marriage in 7:1-6. If it refers to fake marriage simply for the sake of taking care of aged widows, this is a good work. Even so, Paul's repeated phrase in v.28 “you do not/ she does not sin” still remains incomprehensible.

Finally, Deming seems not to have done any interpretation on the most difficult part of 1 Cor 7: vv.36-40. Similar to Rosner who just states the allusions to the OT without further expounding their significance in understanding this Pauline paragraph, Deming simply states

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<sup>40</sup> Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 155.

<sup>41</sup> Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 168.

<sup>42</sup> Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 172-3.



parallels and allusions of these five verses to Stoic materials.<sup>43</sup> Finding similarities to Stoic sayings itself is not an interpretation.<sup>44</sup>

The third scholar is O. Larry Yarbrough. In his monograph *Not Like the Gentiles : Marriage Rules in the Letters of Paul*, Yarbrough takes both Jewish and Graeco-Roman literature into account in interpreting 1 Cor 7. In his introduction, Yarbrough states clearly the purpose of writing this book: “For in every instance in which Paul discusses marriage and sexual morality, the identity and good order of the community is at issue. This aspect of his discussion will be the focus of our attention here.”<sup>45</sup> He then surveys Jewish moral traditions and the Graeco-Roman world concerning the issues of marriage and sexual morality. Then he focuses on the exegesis of two Pauline passages: 1 Thess 4:3-8 and 1 Cor 7. Yarbrough found many parallels of the paraenetic traditions of these two worlds with Paul’s on marriage and sexual morality (abbrev. M & S). There are three precepts in 1 Thess 4:3-8 that represent the original position of Paul on M & S: abstain from sexual immorality v.3b, obtaining your own wife in holiness and honor (v.4), and do not defraud and transgress against your brother in business. (v.6a). He argues that there are formal similarities of 4:4 with Tob 4:12 and T. Levi 9:9-10 as well as numerous references to wives as vessels in the OT. Thus, the word “vessel” refers to one’s wife<sup>46</sup> and so Paul’s teaching about marriage is similar to the Jewish traditions on M & S. The reasons that Paul gave these precepts in 1 Thess 4 are not for any specific situations in church, but as an encouragement for the new converts to keep on living a distinctive identity of being the people of God, as Yarbrough concludes,

Thus, while there *are* striking similarities between Paul’s precepts and those of the Graeco-Roman moralists, it is the Jewish tradition which determined Paul’s formulation of the precepts on marriage and sexual morality. He uses them, that is, to distinguish believers from non-believers.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 202-6; Rosner, *Paul, Scripture & Ethics*, 175-6.

<sup>44</sup> In section 6.4.3, I will propose my own interpretation of 7:25-40 in light of the “Christ” language. It will reveal the common theme of vv.36-40 related to vv.25-35.

<sup>45</sup> O. Larry Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles: Marriage Rules in the Letters of Paul* (SBL 80; Atlanta, Ga. : Scholars Press, 1985), 4.

<sup>46</sup> Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles*, 69-73.

<sup>47</sup> Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles*, 86.

Paul inherited the Jewish tradition of separation from the Gentiles and applied similar principles to the identification of believers as distinct from unbelievers.

In 1 Cor 7, Paul applies his general principle about M & S stated in 1 Thess 4 to some specific issues arising in the Corinthian congregation. There are numerous parallels between Paul's objection to marriage in 1 Cor 7 and Graeco-Roman moralists. 7:1 is a Corinthian slogan resulting from a misunderstanding of Paul's preference for celibacy. He urges them to pursue purity *not* mainly for differentiating the believers from the outside world (like 1 Thess 4) but rather for purification within the community. Thus, right at the beginning, Paul stresses that married couples should have sexual intercourse on a regular basis. V.2 echoes Paul's previous precepts on marriage in 1 Thess 4:4 and provides a transitional stage for him to discuss proper sexual intercourse, in contrast to his previous rebuke against its improper use, i.e. sexual immorality.<sup>48</sup> However, for those who are virgins, widows and unmarried, Paul consistently takes a position against marriage. Paul does not object to marriage itself but to the inevitable functional consequence of its affecting one's response to the call of preaching the gospel. Similarly, the Cynics found that marriage may hinder one from executing divine mission or "exalted politics."<sup>49</sup> On the insistence on marrying to believers in 7:39, Yarbrough thinks that this teaching is again similar to the Cynic's view that the wife should follow the Cynic way of life of her husband, although the latter does not emerge from the concept of community.<sup>50</sup>

Among the many parallels, Yarbrough observes that two of Paul's instructions are unusual to the surrounding world: no divorce for the married and mutual equality of men and women.<sup>51</sup> Paul holds a positive view of marriage and considers its benefit to be more than procreation. Yet, Paul discourages unmarried people from marrying because of the functional advantage for a single person to travel around reaching the gospel. This discouragement remains an advice, not an ethical statement, throughout 1 Cor 7.

Although Yarbrough's work is earlier than the work of Brian Rosner and Will Deming, it gives a more sensible and coherent interpretation of 1 Cor 7. Perhaps this is due to his

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<sup>48</sup> Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles*, 96-97.

<sup>49</sup> Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles*, n.68 in p.43; 104-5.

<sup>50</sup> Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles*, 109-10. Cf. n.47 in p.105.

<sup>51</sup> Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles*, 113, 116.

embrace of both Jewish and Hellenistic literature in interpreting 1 Cor 7 which does not focus on just one tradition, the Jewish (Rosner) or Hellenistic (Deming), thus making his explanation more powerful than the two subsequent scholarly works. Besides, Yarbrough's arguments are clear and precise. He stimulates us to rethink the echoes within the Pauline corpus itself when he points out that Paul uses phrases in 1 Cor 7:2 which are similar to those from 1 Thess 4:4. He also reminds us of the distinctiveness of Paul's marriage rules, not the rules themselves, but the theological rationale behind them. He reveals the significant relationship between the issues of marriage and sexual morality, and the identity formation of the Christian community.

However, the fundamental premise of Yarbrough's thesis is still questionable, i.e. the identification of the word "vessel" in 1 Thess 4:4 as "wife", because the two Jewish parallels he cites are explicitly "obtaining the wife" (γυναικα...λαβὲ/ λάβε...γυναικα). The word "vessel" (σκεῦος) is absent in both Tob 4:12 and *T. Levi* 9:9-10. No matter what formal similarities they share, Yarbrough fails to show that the semantic meaning of "vessel" or "obtaining the vessel" refers to "obtaining a wife" in 1 Thess 4:4. Thus, while it is definitely a teaching against sexual immorality and for maintaining a distinctive identity from the Gentiles, it is questionable whether 1 Thess 4:3-8 refers to Paul's teaching on marriage. Secondly, it is not necessary to presume that 1 Cor 7 addresses specific issues in the Corinthian church. 1 Cor 7 can be regarded as general instructions about marriage that should be observed by all Pauline churches (cf. 7:17). Finally, although many parallels of various contemporary literature are found with 1 Cor 7, Yarbrough's interpretation still fails to point out the rhetoric and logical relation of 1 Cor 7 itself: how is one pericope logically related to another?

### 1.3 Social Identity Formation

During the past 30 years many more New Testament studies have adopted social-scientific criticism in interpreting the New Testament. Social identity theory is one approach under this broad category of social-scientific criticism. Rigorously speaking, social identity theory belongs to the discipline of social psychology which inquires into the development of one's self-identity to an ingroup. Following the development of Henri Tajfel, social identity theory inquires into the cognitive and motivational basis of intergroup differentiation: the minimal conditions that enhance one's sense of belonging and approval with the ingroup at the expense of one's outgroup identities. According to Tajfel, social identity is defined as "that

part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership."<sup>52</sup> According to Howard S. Becker, a social group will label rule-breaking insiders in negative ways.<sup>53</sup> The social group leaders then usually create the social identity of ingroup members through the following ways:

1. Taking direct action against insiders who fall out of the social boundaries by labelling the members as outsiders or betrayers.<sup>54</sup>
2. Stereotyping outsiders as inferior so as to create social boundaries of ingroup members: what we are not. This process often demands critical changes of ingroup members such as changes of habitual behaviours or values.<sup>55</sup>
3. Self-categorizing insiders as being superior by highlighting the distinctive noble beliefs and beneficial practice of the ingroup: who we are, beliefs, common memory or mission that should be shared exclusively by all ingroup members and give meaning and order to ingroup members.<sup>56</sup>

Applying this to New Testament study, the social identity approach, broadly speaking, inquires into the identity formation of the church from the outside world. It focuses on the process of the emergence of the new social identity of the group of Christ-followers in its surrounding social context in the city, while the members of this new group still preserve membership of their previous groups. They become insiders of the church while their pre-existing social identities in other social groups are retained. They still keep close relations and allegiance

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<sup>52</sup> Henri Tajfel, "Social Identity and Intergroup Behaviour," *SSI* 13.2 (1974): 65-93. [P.69]

<sup>53</sup> Howard S. Becker, *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: Free Press, 1963).

<sup>54</sup> Becker's labelling theory in interactionist perspective has been applied by John M.G. Barclay to study the reaction of the Jewish community (an interest group within society) in the first century against Paul and concludes that "he *was viewed* by his contemporary Jews as an apostate, he *was* (historically speaking) an apostate, and no amount of pleading about the Jewish elements in his theology or the diversity within first-century of pleading about the Jewish elements in his theology or the diversity within first-century Judaism can mask or alter that reality." See John M.G. Barclay, "Deviance and Apostasy: Some Applications of Deviance Theory to First-century Judaism and Christianity," in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-scientific Studies of the New Testament in its Context* (ed. Philip F. Esler; London: Routledge, 1995), 110-213. [P.119]

<sup>55</sup> Tajfel, "Social Identity and Intergroup Behaviour," 66.

<sup>56</sup> Tajfel, "Social Identity and Intergroup Behaviour," 75.

with the outsiders in other groups. This approach focuses on how the social identity of a new group is formed and consolidated successfully.<sup>57</sup>

This approach seems to be most relevant to the study of 1 Corinthians. According to John Barclay's comparison of churches in Thessalonica and Corinth, each of their relations to the outside world is distinct. While Thessalonian Christians were seen as hostile and were rejected by the outside world, the Corinthian church assimilated too well with the values and fashion of the world. Barclay has summarised three major characteristics of the Corinthians' Christian life: distinction without the sense of hostility, differentiation without exclusivity and participation in church worship without moral and social realignment.<sup>58</sup> In other words, the Christian identity in the Corinthian church had not yet been well-established when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians.

Most monographs which utilize the social identity approach to interpret Pauline letters focus on Paul's self-categorization of the church or the social ethos of the Christian community. Emphasis is put in the intra-group relations or issues between different subgroups within the addressed church.<sup>59</sup> Few of them study the group-society dynamic relation concerning values

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<sup>57</sup> Representative works of this approach are as follows: David G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996); Philip F. Esler, *Galatians* (London: Routledge, 1998); Joseph H. Hellerman, *The Ancient Church as Family* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001); Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003); Judith Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Greco-Roman World*; Bengt Holmberg & Mikael Winninge, eds., *Identity Formation in the New Testament* (WUNT 227; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Judith Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Period* (London: Routledge, 2009); Kathy Ehrensperger and J. Brian Tucker, eds., *Reading Paul in Context: Explorations in Identity Formation; Essays in Honour of William S. Campbell* (LNTS 428; London: T&T Clark International, 2010). For a comprehensive survey of scholarship which apply social identity theories to understand Pauline corpus, see J. Brian Tucker, *You Belong to Christ: Paul and the Formation of Social Identity in 1 Corinthians 1-4* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 61-88. For Tucker's own study on 1 Corinthians, see J. Brian Tucker, *Remain in Your Calling: Paul and the Continuation of Social Identities in 1 Corinthians* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2011).

<sup>58</sup> John M. G. Barclay, "Thessalonica and Corinth: Social Contrasts in Pauline Christianity," *JSNT* 47 (1992): 49-74 [p.69-70].

<sup>59</sup> For instance, David G. Horrell states that "[I]n the exegetical studies which follow, considerable attention will be given to the potential impact of various texts upon *social groups* and relationships

the church should uphold with reference to the cultural values prevalent in Roman Corinth, and engage squarely the rhetoric of Paul throughout 1 Cor 5—11:1. This study focuses more on Paul's rhetorical purpose with respect to the cultural values in which the Corinthian church is immersed that result in the formation of social identity of insiders. It is inspired by the exegetical works of the following two scholars: Raymond W. Pickett and Alistair Scott May. They have applied the social identity approach as an heuristic device in their exegesis and illuminated some coherent thoughts of Paul in 1 Cor 5-7.<sup>60</sup>

Pickett adopts the sociology of knowledge of Berger and Luckmann on the three processes of world building: externalisation, objectivation and internalisation. One indispensable tool for world building is a coherent symbol system, but a problem of the Corinthian church was that there were multiple symbol systems coexisting in the community causing inconsistency between their belief and practice.<sup>61</sup> Their main problem was the discrepancy between identity in Christ and their existing social identity<sup>62</sup> which resulted in moral crisis.<sup>63</sup> Thus, Paul uses the "word of the cross" / "Christ crucified" as the keystone to construct a coherent symbol system to internalise Christian values and identity in the Corinthian church.<sup>64</sup> *As a result, this new Christian value system counteracts the Graeco-Roman ideals and values of the surrounding culture.* As commented by Pickett,

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*within the Christian community. [italics mine]*". See Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence*, 38. In his new interpretation of Romans, Philip F. Esler argues that "[A] central concern of this reading of Romans is the issue of ethnic conflict...where the two subgroups that Paul is trying to bring together under an overarching common identity are ethnic in nature, and because it is a pressing problem in today's world." See Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans*, 40.

<sup>60</sup> Besides Pickett and May, I am also inspired by Barclay's notion of apostasy: not only was Paul viewed by his contemporary Jews as an apostate, Paul himself creates definition of deviants in 1 Corinthians as well as the Pastorals to warn against church members from degenerating into apostates. See Barclay, "Deviance and Apostasy," 119-21.

<sup>61</sup> Raymond W. Pickett, *The Cross in Corinth: The Social Significance of the Death of Jesus* (JSNTSup 143; Sheffield : Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 31.

<sup>62</sup> Pickett, *The Cross in Corinth*, 100.

<sup>63</sup> Pickett, *The Cross in Corinth*, 102.

<sup>64</sup> Pickett, *The Cross in Corinth*, 34.



While on the one hand Paul's comprehension and communication of the gospel were ineluctably inscribed by Greco-Roman cultural-linguistic codes, at a deep structural level it was inherently subversive of those same cultural-linguistic codes.<sup>65</sup>

One major contribution of Pickett's interpretation is to show the thematic and linguistic link of the lawsuit in 6:1-8 with its preceding context. In relation to the preceding pericope 5:9-13, this lawsuit probably relates to material possessions according to the word "defraud" (*ἀποστερέω*) in 6:7-8. Thus, it is a demonstration of Paul's condemnation of sins of greed (*πλεονέκτης*) in 5:10 which are characteristic of unbelievers. In relation to the next pericope 6:9-20, he points out the same word group "unrighteous" to describe the brother who initiated the lawsuit in v.8 and those unbelievers in v.9 who cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. In sum, Paul is shaming the audience in the whole section 5:9-6:11: they were acting like unbelievers on the basis of their greed (5:10; cf.6:1-8).<sup>66</sup>

While Pickett emphasises Paul's building of a new symbolic universe through the word of the cross, Alistair Scott May has undertaken serious exegesis of 1 Cor 5-7 for inquiry into the function of Paul's sexual ethics in shaping Christian identity. I agree with Jeromey Q. Martini that, "May's use of social identity theory functions too independently of his exegesis, such that the theory is superfluous to his argument. May is a perceptive exegete, however, and offers a number of valuable insights."<sup>67</sup> This comment is apt, for May's thesis is firmly grounded in exegesis of the text instead of superimposing the social theory into the text; he points out the danger of using social science to replace careful historical-exegetical study at the beginning of

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<sup>65</sup> Pickett, *The Cross in Corinth*, 32.

<sup>66</sup> Pickett, *The Cross in Corinth*, 112-3. For his endeavor of showing the continuous theme of another "digression" 1 Cor 9 with its surrounding context, see Pickett, *The Cross in Corinth*, 117-8. In that case, however, exegetical support for his argument is weak and so it is deemed unpersuasive.

<sup>67</sup> Jeromey Q. Martini, review of Alistair Scott May, *'The Body for the Lord': Sex and Identity in 1 Corinthians 5-7*, *ExpTim* 117.6 (2006): 262.

his work.<sup>68</sup> Being aware of the multiple social ties of a normal citizen in Roman Corinth and the tensions which resulted from these different commitments, social identity theory helps us to raise questions of the texts. May finds the answers from his historical exegesis of the text. The most significant contribution of his monograph is his radical interpretation of the text. His main thesis is that 1 Cor 5-7 should be regarded as a coherent discourse which results from his new interpretation:

Throughout the chapters Paul presents a clear division between the immoral world and the sanctified church and invites believers both to conform to the moral stereotype presented and to base their behaviour towards others upon this dichotomy.<sup>69</sup>

One major contribution relevant to my study is that May has established a close connection between 6:12-20 and 1 Cor 7. The slogan “all things are lawful for me” is not from libertines in the church, but taken from Paul’s previous teaching of eating idol food:

We may thus surmise the following. Paul has previously contended, in the context of the food issues, for the ἐξουσία of the believer, perhaps...using the formulation πάντα ἔξεστιν...Paul now sees the danger in a (perhaps mischievous) misapplication of such to the domain of sexual ethics (or perhaps this has actually occurred), and so heads this off at the beginning of his teaching on πορνεία. He, Paul, has ἐξουσία over all things, but yet this freedom does not permit nor pertain to πορνεία.<sup>70</sup>

Therefore, in 6:12-20 Paul does not address a real situation as in 1 Cor 5:1. There were probably no Christian brothers in Corinth who visited prostitutes on a regular basis. Thus, Paul’s method here is different from 1 Cor 5. 6:12-20 is just Paul’s clarification of his previous teaching, that they should not misapply the rules of freedom in food issues (“all things are lawful to me”) to licence sexual immorality. Paul simply cites the issue of visiting prostitutes as an illustration.

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<sup>68</sup> May, *‘The Body for the Lord’*, 11.

<sup>69</sup> May, *‘The Body for the Lord’*, 260.

<sup>70</sup> May, *‘The Body for the Lord’*, 102.

In the light of May's new interpretation, 6:13 is regarded as a thematic statement of Paul to clarify the critical difference between food issues and sexual immorality. Food is for the stomach and the stomach for food; the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord. The implication is that sexual ethics correspond to Christian identity, while food issues do not.<sup>71</sup>

Sexual sin is unique in the way it destroys Christian identity:

Of course, other sins can exclude a man, even a believer, from his inheritance in Christ (6:9-11)...sexual immorality is unique...in its locus and effect: in the manner in which it disrupts union with Christ. Sexual immorality is unique precisely because it is no mere ethical breach, but because it is a direct transfer of the body out of union with Christ and into that with a πόρνη.<sup>72</sup>

In other words, 6:12-20 about visiting prostitutes and 1 Cor 7 about marriage share the same theme of Paul's instructions on treating various sexual unions: commercial sex and marital sex. In both cases Paul seeks to minimise the possible negative outcome of such unions that divert us from spiritual union with Christ and being faithful to Him.<sup>73</sup>

May's interpretation of 1 Cor 7 is intriguing where he uses Paul's sexual ethics in 1 Cor 5-6 to interpret it. In order to avoid breaking the spiritual union with Christ, Paul set up a practical tripartite hierarchy in 1 Cor 7: Celibacy>Marriage>Sexual Immorality.<sup>74</sup> Marriage is regarded as a concession or a safety net to safeguard us from falling into sexual immorality. 7:17-31 are Paul's further advocacy of being celibate, but in different arguments:

for vv.17-24: Remain as you are + avoid entering into slavery ➔ Remain single, not to be enslaved by marriage;

for vv.26-31: Remain as you are + avoid worldly troubles ➔ Remain single, not to get married.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> In his own words: "Food is trivial, a natural urge to be followed, lacking in any eternal consequences, irrelevant to the identity of the believer (8.8). Sex, however, goes to the root of who the believer is." See May, *'The Body for the Lord'*, 110.

<sup>72</sup> May, *'The Body for the Lord'*, 127.

<sup>73</sup> May, *'The Body for the Lord'*, 135, 139.

<sup>74</sup> May, *'The Body for the Lord'*, 219.

<sup>75</sup> May, *'The Body for the Lord'*, 231-2.

Thus, singleness is Paul's preference in order to keep oneself for single-minded devotion to the Lord. *This is counter-cultural, for marriage is preferred in general and so Paul's preference to singleness is diametrically opposite to the social context of the Corinthian church.*

May reveals the inadequacy of a traditional interpretation which relies too much on the hypothetical "situations" of the Corinthian church. *He redirects our focus back to the design and agenda of Paul's own intention of establishing Christian identity which is supposed to be counter-cultural against the surrounding social ethos.*

His suggestions of similarity of πόρνη-union and marriage in terms of this same mastery of one's body, however, is puzzling. There is one critical difference between marriage and πόρνη-union: the former is other-regarding, fulfilling the *spouse's* sexual desire through one's own body (7:1-4), while the latter is fulfilling *one's own desire* by a prostitute's body. This opposing purpose of the sexual act makes it difficult to draw parallels between them.<sup>76</sup> Sexual relations in marriage are totally different from the self-gratifying sexual activities of illicit sexual relationships. These shortcomings in May's arguments encourage me to inquire whether Paul's definition of marriage is different from the concept of marriage in the social ethos. In short: what kind of marriage does Paul address in each pericope in 1 Cor 7? *Does Paul promote celibacy to counter the cultural ethos, as May suggests, or does he promote a radical concept of marriage to counter the culture?*

Both Pickett and May have demonstrated the significance of the social identity approach in understanding the logic of 1 Corinthians. *It is a powerful perspective that enables us to discover the rhetorical purpose of Paul: establishing a Christian identity for a Corinthian audience that entails counter-cultural values and practice.*

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<sup>76</sup> May states that marriage cannot be equated with πορνεία because the latter is sin while the former is not. However, May still regards marriage as "a second-class commitment to the Lord." Allowing one's body to be mastered by one's spouse conflicts with the highest ideal of "body for the Lord." See May, 'The Body for The Lord', 106.

## 1.4 Condemning Eating Idol Food

The efforts of three scholars in the past decade command our attention in figuring out the compositional unity and coherence of 1 Cor 8—11:1. They are Alex Cheung, Richard Phua and John Fotopoulos.<sup>77</sup>

Alex Cheung engages deeply with the tension of Paul's treatment of idol food in 1 Cor 8 and 1 Cor 10 in his monograph *Idol Food in Corinth*. The traditional view regards Paul's treatment of idol food in 1 Cor 8—11:1 as a matter of indifference, probably resulting from reading Rom 14:1—15:13 into 1 Cor 8—11:1.<sup>78</sup> Cheung's thesis challenges this traditional view and comes to a conclusion diametrically opposite to the traditional view: Paul, *from first to last* in 1 Corinthians, *forbids* Corinthian Christians from eating food *in any situation* once they are informed it has been sacrificed to idols. In his words,

I propose that Paul regards the eating of idol food, *with the awareness of their idolatrous origins*, as a sinful act rather than a mere ἀδιάφορον (*contra* the traditional view). Paul prohibits not only dining in idol temples but also eating any food, including marketplace food, that is identified as idol food (*contra* Fee).<sup>79</sup>

He substantiates his thesis through the following four areas of research: archaeological evidence,<sup>80</sup> ancient Jewish scripture and literature,<sup>81</sup> modern rhetorical theory on persuasive discourse<sup>82</sup> and Paul's influence on early Church Fathers on the issue of eating idol food.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> There are numerous scholarly researches focusing on the study of 1 Cor 8-11:1. For a comprehensive survey of past research (before 2003) on 1 Cor 8-11:1, see John Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth* (WUNT 2.151; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 4-37, 41-48.

<sup>78</sup> Alex T. Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth: Jewish Background and Pauline Legacy* (JSNTSup 176; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 95.

<sup>79</sup> Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 108.

<sup>80</sup> Cheung mainly depends on Gooch's study on the social meaning of eating idol food both in temples and private meals: Peter D. Gooch, "Food and the Limits of Community: 1 Corinthians 8 to 10" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1988), 15-160. According to Gooch, these meals are very common social activities. Saying *no* to eating idol food will be condemned as anti-social. Therefore, the promise of 1 Cor 10:13 is so precious to stand against this test and at the same time so powerful to blow away any excuse for compromises. See Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 28-34, 38, 146.

In relation to our study, Cheung's main contribution to the coherence of 1 Cor 8-10 is to show the logical connection of 1 Cor 9 with its surrounding context: 1 Cor 9 is a rhetorical link for Paul to develop a two-stage argument from 1 Cor 8 (lesser evil) to his main thesis in 1 Cor 10:1-22.<sup>84</sup> At first, Paul tries to identify himself with the knowers' stance and to soften their heart of insistence by an appeal to the possibility of destruction of the weak. In an other-regarded, honour-and-shame based culture, this strategy is very powerful to persuade the knowers to rethink their position on eating idol food.<sup>85</sup> Thus, in 1 Cor 8, Paul does not say that eating idol food is a matter of indifference. Cheung points out the importance of the double negative in 1 Cor 8:8 and concludes that "it makes clear where Paul's sympathy really lies: do not eat!"<sup>86</sup>

Then, at the second stage in 10:1-22, Paul makes his thrust and focuses on the dangers of the knowers themselves: eating idol food is a cardinal sin which will bring them into destruction, like the ancient Israelites in the wilderness.<sup>87</sup> There are two notions Paul intends to establish in his use of the scriptures: the similar spiritual conditions of Israelites in the wilderness and the knowers in Corinthian churches, and the similar destiny Corinthians may share with ancient Israelites:

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<sup>81</sup> Cheung mainly bases on this area of research to argue for Paul's negative stance towards eating idol food. The Jewish literature in his research includes: the Jewish scripture, Jewish Apocryphal Writings, Pseudepigraphia, Qumran, rabbinic writings and Diaspora Judaism represented by Philo, Josephus. See Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 39-74. Cheung concludes that "nothing in Paul's Jewish background would encourage Paul to condone eating idol food." (p.81) This research is especially significant for him to interpret 10:1-22, where he finds a lot of parallels between Paul's teachings and the Jewish scripture. He also shows frequent evocations of Jewish literature *Joseph and Aseneth* in 1 Cor 8-10 (pp.54-55, 104, 121).

<sup>82</sup> Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 115-7. Cheung largely depends on this theory to analyse the rhetorical strategy of Paul.

<sup>83</sup> Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 165-284.

<sup>84</sup> "1 Corinthians 8.1—11.1 must be seen as a two-stage argument to dissuade the Corinthian Christians from eating idol food. To eat idol food is both unloving and idolatrous. It will cause the weak to ruin and bring God's judgment against idolatry upon oneself." Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 109.

<sup>85</sup> Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 116.

<sup>86</sup> Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 134.

<sup>87</sup> Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 143.

just as the Israelites came out of Egypt with all the spiritual blessings but were judged by God with catastrophic judgment (1 Cor 10:1-5) because they tested the Lord and fell into idolatry (and sexual immorality), the Corinthians with all their spiritual nourishment are courting the same disaster in their present participation in idolatry (and sexual immorality).<sup>88</sup>

Thus, with a more serious warning to the Corinthian Christians, 1 Cor 10 comes to the same conclusion as 1 Cor 8: say *no* to idol food.

Based on this rhetorical analysis by Cheung, 1 Cor 9 is not a digression. On the contrary, it is necessary for Paul to build up his argument to the thrust in 10:1-22. It is necessary for Paul to persuade the knowers to lay down their presumed rights and disarm their defenses before he makes the thrust. 1 Cor 9 then functions as a runway for Paul to argue from lesser disdain in 1 Cor 8 (unloving) to strong prohibition in 1 Cor 10 against eating idol food.<sup>89</sup>

Finally, 10:23-30 is not Paul's concession either. On the one hand, Cheung argues that Paul responds to similar challenges by the knowers to his previous letter and avoids criticism of isolation from the world. It is similar to the Corinthians' misunderstanding in 5:9-10.<sup>90</sup> On the other hand, Paul renounces any compromise of their confession for the conscience of the pagan and says *no* to eating the food once they are informed of its idolatrous origin. Thus, 10:23-30 is in fact Paul's *no* again of eating the food once it is identified as idol food. It reaffirms the point of saying *no* to eating idol food *in any situation*.<sup>91</sup>

Cheung has engaged squarely with the text and addressed almost every apparent contradiction in 1 Cor 8-10. He resolves the seeming contrary positions of Paul on the issue of eating idol food in 1 Cor 8 and 1 Cor 10 as well as the logical connection of 1 Cor 9 to its surrounding context. His argument is logical and context sensitive, comparable with May's treatment of 1 Cor 5-7. He has also demonstrated the parallel teachings of Paul on *πορνεία* in

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<sup>88</sup> Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 145.

<sup>89</sup> Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 141-2. For his detailed analysis of the logical necessity of 1 Cor 9 in 1 Cor 8-10, see Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 137-43.

<sup>90</sup> Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 153.

<sup>91</sup> Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 160-1, where Cheung regards 10:28-29 as rhetorical questions and not hypothetical questions "for which no answer need to be provided, because the answer is clear: do not eat!" (p.161)

1 Cor 6 and εἰδωλόθυτος in 1 Cor 10 and the common theme of glorifying God in these two issues (6:20; 8:31).<sup>92</sup>

There are still limitations to Cheung's proposed interpretation theory, however. First of all, his interpretation of the logic of 1 Cor 9 is unconvincing. It seems to be inadequate to account for Paul developing such a long "runway" about voluntary surrender of one's freedom just for the sake of a connection of a two-stage argument, arguing from the lesser to the main thesis. If eating idol food, with the awareness of their idolatrous origins, is intrinsically evil, why does Paul articulate it in terms of renouncing one's *freedom/right* in 1 Cor 9 instead of direct prohibition, for "resolute rejection of evil" is a major premise from 1 Cor 5 onwards (cf. 5:11; 6:9-10)? A sinful act is never an option for the Christian, nor a "right."

The only relevant answer I found from Cheung's argument is his notion of "killing two birds with one stone" of Paul's rhetoric in 1 Cor 9:

On the one hand, he [Paul] highlights the voluntary renunciation of his apostolic rights to put pressure on the knowers....On the other hand, Paul's vigorous affirmation of his rights gives his example a more secure base before those who might challenge him.<sup>93</sup>

However, this notion is unconvincing on two grounds. First, Paul mentions sacrifice of his own rights *for the preaching of the gospel* (9:12, 19). The rights he sacrifices are not only apostolic rights, but also include those for any Christian (9:4-5), and the connotation of "...how much more..." is absent here. Secondly, none of these rights relate to acts that cause offense to others, not to mention sinful acts; these are rights on issues of ἀδιάφορον. If Paul had linked his sacrifice of his own rights as examples for knowers to lay down their rights, it would have further confused the knowers in regard to eating idol food in the temple as ἀδιάφορον instead of a sinful act, which is directly contradictory to Cheung's thesis. In sum, Cheung explains well why Paul *does not mention* explicitly the renouncement of his rights on eating idol food in 1 Cor 9;<sup>94</sup> yet he does not explain why Paul *mentions rights/freedom so many times* in 9:1-18 if he aims at condemning eating idol food as cardinal sin. It may disarm the

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<sup>92</sup> Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 112-4, 161-2.

<sup>93</sup> Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 142.

<sup>94</sup> Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 140-2.



knowers' insistence but it will also simultaneously disarm their alertness towards the sinful nature of eating idol food.

Another limitation is that Cheung seems to have overlooked the significance of Christ language (including the event of Christ's death and resurrection) that Paul has mentioned so many times in these three chapters (8:11-12; 9:1-2, 9:21, 10:4, 16, 21; 11:1). It is unfair to say that Cheung totally ignores Christ events or the "Christ" language in his interpretation, but when he mentions Christ, it is only confined to the issue of Christian allegiance and he never expounds its significance in understanding the texts. Thus, Cheung's arguments for Paul's negative view towards eating idol food are deemed insufficient.

Finally, Cheung presumes that idolatry is univocally defined and rejected in Jewish literature and in ancient Judaism and that there is consent from various Jewish traditions on the condemnation of eating idol food.<sup>95</sup> This does not hold up under close scrutiny. This weakness is figured out by Phua and becomes his main thesis in his monograph *Idolatry and Authority*.

Phua's monograph *Idolatry and Authority*<sup>96</sup> has made a significant contribution to the study of 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 in both negative and positive ways. Negatively, Phua has forcefully challenged a general assumption among scholars (including Cheung) that the attitude of Diaspora Jews towards idolatry and their definitions of idolatry are univocal. By using the critical analysis of idolatry by Halbertal and Margalit,<sup>97</sup> Phua has demonstrated that there are various reactions against idolatry co-existing in various traditions of Diaspora Judaism and the definitions of idolatrous practice are *not* so univocal as Cheung suggests. While some Diaspora Jews are extremely reserved,<sup>98</sup> others are more accommodating.<sup>99</sup>

Positively, Phua argues that there are parallels between the stances towards idolatry of all the three parties (Paul, the "strong" and "weak") and stances of Diaspora Judaism. Paul

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<sup>95</sup> Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 41, 43, 56, 58-59, 65, 70-71.

<sup>96</sup> Richard Liong-seng Phua, *Idolatry and Authority: A Study of 1 Corinthians 8.1-11.1 in the Light of the Jewish Diaspora* (LNTS 299; London: T. & T. Clark International, 2005).

<sup>97</sup> M. Halbertal and A. Margalit, *Idolatry* (trans. Naomi Goldblum; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

<sup>98</sup> Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 50-90 (chapter 3).

<sup>99</sup> Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 91-125 (chapter 4).

adopts a strict tradition mainly inherited from LXX concerning the real existence of demons behind the idol. Idolatrous practice is defined by two criteria: wrong objects of worship and wrong kinds of worship—motives (dishonour) and ways (misrepresentation).<sup>100</sup> Violating either one of the above criteria is already sufficient to be condemned as idolatrous practice:

[I]dolatry in the LXX is not simply viewed from the angle of the worship of other gods, but also from various other angles such as the acts and intentions involved in the worship of God, how God is viewed, and whether God's sovereignty is compromised.<sup>101</sup>

The "strong", on the other hand, take a lax position similar to Diaspora Judaism articulated in chapter 4 of *Idolatry and Authority*. Parallel to the *Letter of Aristeas* 16 and the ban against reviling gods in other religions in LXX Exod 22:27a, the "strong" can find leeway to attend pagan temple feasts even though they uphold the belief of monotheism, for this one God can be named differently, like Zeus, in pagan religions.<sup>102</sup> Thus, participating in pagan temple worship does not violate their belief in monotheism.

Phua then interprets 1 Cor 8-10 in the light of these different definitions of idolatrous practice within Diaspora Judaism. He regards 1 Cor 8:1-6 as the rationale for the "strong" attending pagan cultic meals. It is summarised in three notions:

- i) the one God can bear different names in other religions;
- ii) idols are nothing and so do not affect our daily lives, and
- iii) the freedom in Christ's salvation entails freedom and rights for them to attend pagan temple meals.<sup>103</sup>

Paul then responds to all three notions of the "strong" respectively. 1 Cor 8:7-13 and 10:1-22 are his responses to the first two notions: Paul does in fact teach that attending pagan temple meals constitutes idolatrous practice. Based on the findings in Diaspora Jewish literature, Phua argues that Paul echoes mainly Deut 32:16-17 and Isa 65:11 (and probably Ps 95) to designate physical idols as representation of evil spirits rather than representation of the one

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<sup>100</sup> Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 33 and the whole chapter 3.

<sup>101</sup> Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 48.

<sup>102</sup> Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 99.

<sup>103</sup> Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 129-37.

true God. Thus, notion i) of the “strong” is wrong. Concerning notion ii), Paul states that idols are nothing but they do affect the daily lives of believers. Eating idol food makes the participator liable to having fellowship with the spirits. As a result, God’s final rejection ensues, as has happened before to the Israelites in the wilderness due to their acts of unfaithfulness. Thus, 10:22 is

evoking, intertextually, all the three passages, Deuteronomy 32, Psalm 95, and Isaiah 65, taking elements from each and interweaving them to bring home the point that the ‘strong’, by eating idol-meat in the pagan temple, are in fact committing acts of idolatry which turn them into partners with ‘demons’.<sup>104</sup>

Therefore, notion ii) of the “strong” is rejected again by Paul.

1 Cor 9 then addresses the notion iii) of the “strong”: freedom in Christ. On the one hand, it is a defence of Paul’s highest authority; he himself is their final court of appeal for a verdict on whether attending pagan temple meals is idolatrous. On the other hand, Paul demonstrates what true freedom in Christ is all about: giving up one’s own rights for the salvation of the others. As a result, Paul expects the “strong” to imitate him and give up their freedom of eating idol food in the temples so that the weak may not be encouraged to relapse back to idolatrous lives. Otherwise, they will also face the destiny of eschatological destruction and disqualification in the final judgment of God, like the Israelites who had been saved from Egypt but were finally rejected and died in the wilderness. Their present status of being saved does not guarantee final salvation if they do not shun idolatry.

Although there are some drawbacks to his interpretation of 1 Cor 8-11:1 (see Excursus 3), Phua’s contribution to figuring out the coherence of 1 Cor 8—11:1 is seminal. Like Alistair Scott May’s interpretation of 1 Cor 5-7, Phua argues convincingly that the main problems of the Corinthians were their misinterpretation of Paul’s previous teachings. Paul in this letter seeks to give his authentic clarification / definitions and expects the Corinthians to follow. Phua’s interpretation explains Paul’s seemingly contrary stance towards participating in pagan temple meals in 1 Cor 8:1-6 (matter of indifference) and 10:1-22 (matter of cardinal sin). Secondly, he points out the significance of 1 Cor 9 to the surrounding context. It functions as a response to the “strong”’s notion of “freedom in Christ.” Phua adopts Alex Cheung’s

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<sup>104</sup> Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 152-3.

observation of the four groups in 9:20-23: Paul's formula is "to X, I become *like* X" except the fourth group: I become weak, where the word "like" is omitted.<sup>105</sup> But Phua has given a more profound interpretation of this omission than Cheung: "In the light of 8:13, Paul is saying that when he seeks to keep the 'weak' from falling into idolatry, he is in fact 'winning' them. And it is Paul's example to the 'strong'."<sup>106</sup> Under Phua's interpretation, this ending is properly highlighted as the main thrust of 1 Cor 9 which forcefully substantiates his claim for the function of 1 Cor 9 in the surrounding context.

The last scholar that helps us understand Paul's logic in 1 Cor 8—11:1 is John Fotopoulos. His monograph *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth* effectively constructs a socio-historical context of Graeco-Roman dining related to 1 Cor 8-11:1 and its significance to the daily social lives of Corinthians. This socio-historical context, based mainly on recent archaeological findings in Roman Corinth, reveals different social meanings and implications of dining at the pagan temples and at private houses.

In 1 Cor 8-10, Fotopoulos suggests there are four different situations in which eating sacrificial food takes place:

- a. 8:1-13                      in a pagan temple precinct
- b. 10:14-22                at the table of a god in formal meals
- c. 10:27-11:1            at a meal attended by invitation which a pagan is hosting, probably at a private home
- d. 10:25                    in the macellum / market<sup>107</sup>

Fotopoulos argues that Paul condemns eating sacrificial food on the occasion depicted in a. and b. According to Fotopoulos' historical research, situation a. probably took place in the temple of Asklepieios, because the dining rooms were big enough for a reclining position and this cult was popular in Paul's time. Moreover, the presence of the picture of the gods in the

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<sup>105</sup> Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 142.

<sup>106</sup> Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 195.

<sup>107</sup> Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth*, 251.

dining room of this temple led people to believe that the gods were really present in their dining. The meals eaten in this temple were regarded as a religious ritual to the gods.<sup>108</sup>

The same applies to situation b. in the formal meals at private homes in front of the family gods of the host:

- i) religious rituals were done before the formal meal began. The ritual was to invite the gods or deceased to dine with them;
- ii) there was a drinking time after this kind of formal dinner. The guests were likely to have sex with the serving girls as part of the entertainment during the drinking time;
- ii) the food taken was almost definitely sacrificed to idols.<sup>109</sup>

For these reasons, Paul regards eating idol food in situations a. and b. as idolatrous.

On the other hand, Paul endorses eating sacrificial food on occasions c. and d. because he tries to avoid misunderstandings of social disengagement from unbelieving outsiders, just as they misunderstood his previous letter in 5:9-13. Thus, Paul endorses eating idol food in situation c. In situation d., it is hard to make a distinction between sacrificial and non-sacrificial food, so Paul endorses eating in these cases except when they are told before the meal that the food has been sacrificed.<sup>110</sup>

The strength of Fotopoulos' work lies in his vivid depiction of temple dining, and this helps us clarify the various situations Paul is handling. The evidence regarding temple dining in Asklepios in the historical context of 8:10 is convincing. From the archaeological evidence, "Asklepios's sanctuary and the dining rooms are both structurally and functionally connected."<sup>111</sup> As a result, the "strong" eats *within* the temple precinct in the event Paul describes in 8:10. As Asklepios was a god of healing, pagans were likely to invite friends to come to their thanksgiving meal in that temple when they recovered from sickness. Christians in Corinth were likely to be invited by friends for this thanksgiving dinner which took place in the dining room *within* the temple precinct.

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<sup>108</sup> Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth*, 64-70.

<sup>109</sup> Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth*, 169-78.

<sup>110</sup> Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth*, 262-3.

<sup>111</sup> Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth*, 65-66.

Fotopoulos' socio-historical study not only helps us understand why Paul regards the situation in 8:10 as a stumbling block to the weak, it also helps us understand how difficult the "trial" the "strong" are facing (10:13) if they decline to attend these social meals taking place in temple. This suggestion is more convincing than the scenario of eating idol food suggested by Bruce Winter: social meals taking place in the Temple of Poseidon complex during the Isthmian Games.<sup>112</sup> The suggestion of Fotopoulos shows how common this test is to the daily lives of the "strong", not just once every two years at the great Isthmian Games. The danger lies not in the food itself but the social implications of attending idol meals from the perspective of their unbelieving friends as well as other weak Christians within the church.

Although there is no direct relevance to the coherence of 1 Cor 8-10, Fotopoulos' work reveals the social meanings and significance of attending idol meals in the temple. This may help us understand the motivation and purpose of Paul's rhetoric. Moreover, the sexual entertainment within formal dining shows the close relation between the issue of *πορνεία* and *εἰδωλόθυτον* in the social lives of Corinthians: they are likely to encounter both issues when they attend private banquets. This depiction enhances our further research on the continuity between 1 Cor 5-7 and 1 Cor 8—11:1 as well as Paul's rhetoric on one's freedom in 1 Cor 9.

## 1.5 The Approach and Program of This Study

The scholars that I have listed above are those who sought to explain the logic of Paul in the whole or parts of 1 Cor 5—11:1. Although I have pointed out the limitations of their works, I am deeply indebted to their innovative and painstaking engagement with the text. Unlike traditional interpretations which focus mainly on the imaginary situations within the small Corinthian church, these scholars refocus our attention back on the author's intention: the logic and thought of Paul himself. Moreover, they refocus our attention to the literary context of the text itself.

I have observed that the works of these scholars come to the following two conclusions:

1. 1 Cor 5-7 and 1 Cor 8—11:1 are two coherent and united discourses;

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<sup>112</sup> Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 269-86.

2. Paul seeks to differentiate insiders from outsiders throughout 1 Cor 5—11:1.

I then take these two as my working assumptions to further interpret 1 Cor 5—11:1. I will take the social identity approach stated in section 1.3 as a heuristic device and focus on the following questions:

- a) How does Paul identify and handle betraying insiders? Is there any parallel in the Jewish tradition inherited by Paul that explains the rationale of Paul?
- b) How does Paul differentiate insiders from outsiders? How will it be interpreted from the ears of the audience related to their ordinary social lives and assumed social values?
- c) How does Paul self-categorise insiders? How does Paul define insiders in positive terms? How will it be understood by the audience in a way related to their ordinary social lives and assumed social values?

In section 1.3, I have pointed out that social group leaders, according to studies of social identity theory, create the social identity of ingroup members through three ways. The above three questions are derived from them. From now on, the social identity approach stated in section 1.3 will be implicit in the rhetorical interpretation of 1 Cor 5-11:1 throughout my thesis even though I do not explicitly mention it.

The program of this study will be as follows:

First, the literary unity of 1 Cor 5-11:1 will be demonstrated, showing that Paul intends his readers to regard 1 Cor 5-11:1 as a unified whole instead of two independent sections (chapter 2). This reveals Paul's intention of presenting a unifying theme in 1 Cor 5—11:1.

Second, I will investigate how Paul uses "Satan" language to build up the social identity of the church of God—the social group addressed by this letter. This social group is already briefly stated in 1 Cor 1:2: to be sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place. I will show how Paul shares the common tradition of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Pseudepigrapha which use Satan as a rhetoric of shame to police the in-group members against betraying their identities. Otherwise, they would be treated worse than both outsiders and normal insiders. This reveals the thought world of Paul inherited from Jewish tradition (chapter 3). Question a) will be addressed.

Third, I will investigate how Paul uses Scripture to build up the social identity of the church of God. In this study, “Scripture” / the Old Testament (OT) / the Jewish scripture refers to Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Jewish Hebrew Bible commonly used in the first century Jewish community, unless specified. The critical version of Septuagint edited by Alfred Rahlfs is adopted in this study. The numbering of chapter and verses follows LXX numbering of chapter and verse of the Bible.<sup>113</sup> Detailed analysis will be done for the rhetorical purpose of echoes of Scripture in 1 Cor 5-11:1. Echoes of Scripture refers to the method *metalepsis* advocated by Richard Hays: “a device that requires the reader to interpret a citation or allusion by recalling aspects of the original context that are not explicitly quoted.”<sup>114</sup> The rhetorical analysis is divided into two parts: identifying echoes of OT texts in 1 Cor 5-11:1 with certain objective criteria, and investigating the changes these instructions entail to the existing social lives and values of the Corinthian audience (chapters 4-5). This is the main body of the new interpretation of this thesis. Question b) will be addressed.

Finally, I will investigate how Paul uses Christ language to build up the social identity of the church of God. The rhetorical purpose of Christ language in 1 Cor 5—11:1 will be explored from the perspective of the Corinthian audience in terms of self-categorisation (chapter 6). Question c) will be addressed.

## **Excursus 1: Critical Comments on Hayes’ Notion of “Carnal Impurity” in *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities***

Concerning the interpretation of Paul’s instruction on mixed marriage in 1 Cor 7, Hayes’ attempt to interpret vv.12-15 by creating a Pauline notion of “carnal impurity” is confusing. Hayes defines “carnal impurity” as “a defilement of flesh by immorality that is transferred to other flesh with which it is sexually united.”<sup>115</sup> This notion may explain Paul’s rationale of

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<sup>113</sup> For an overview of the textual criticism of Septuagint, see R. Timothy Mclay, *The Use of Septuagint in New Testament Research* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 5-7, 9-14, 100-136.

<sup>114</sup> Richard B. Hays, “Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul: Abstract,” in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel* (ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders; JSNTSup 83; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 42-6. [p.43]

<sup>115</sup> Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities*, 96.



prohibiting sexual immorality in 1 Cor 6. However, it is difficult to explain Paul's permission on existing intermarriage, that she/he is converted to Christ after he/she is married to an unbeliever. If there had been a kind of carnal impurity in Paul's mind, why would Paul presume in 1 Cor 7:12-15 that the believer will sanctify the unbelieving spouse but not the other way around, that the unbelieving spouse defiles the believer? The tone of concession, that Hayes suggests, offers no evidence in the context of 1 Cor 7:12-15. In order to stop the transfer of moral impurity to keep the new believer "clean," the logical conclusion (if Paul bears such "carnal impurity" in mind) would have been a command for divorce as soon as one partner is sanctified. On the other hand, if "carnal purity/impurity" is similar to "genealogical purity/impurity" which, unlike moral /ritual impurity, is characterised by its independence of one's act after the purity status is established, how can the purity status of the child, who was presumably born *before* its parents' conversion, be affected *after* one of his parents converted to Christ? If "Paul's new 'carnal impurity' conflates ritual and moral impurity,"<sup>116</sup> then the purity change of the parents would have not brought any change to their descendents. As a result, no matter whether Hayes' notion of "carnal impurity" is associated or analogous with genealogical or ritual-moral impurity, it fails to account for the change of purity status of one's descendent after one has converted to Christ. In all, I find Hayes' notion of "carnal impurity/purity" creates more confusing questions of 1 Cor 7:14 rather than shedding light on it.

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<sup>116</sup> Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities*, 96.

## Excursus 2: Critical Comments on Phua's *Idolatry and Authority*

The following are some problems I observe in Phua's interpretations.

The first main category is Phua's interpretation of Jewish texts and archaeological evidence.

Concerning the Artapanus, Phua concludes:

...while Artapanus remains committed to the Jewish people as superior and the god of the Jews as the master of the universe, he displays an attitude that appears accommodating to other gods. His accommodation to other religious traditions allows him not only to view them reasonably positively, but also gives him the relative freedom to even attribute the Egyptian animal cults to Moses.<sup>117</sup>

In my opinion, however, it is more reasonable to regard Artapanus' exaltation of Moses as evidence of his view of the superiority of Judaism over Egyptian religions rather than his accommodation to other religious traditions, as Phua suggests. Moreover, Artapanus' works are scant. Thus, whether he holds an accommodating stance towards idolatry or an apologetic agenda of justifying the superiority of Judaism is subject to further inquiry.

Another problem is Phua's interpretation of archaeological findings of inscription on the rock near the Temple of Pan<sup>118</sup> and the inscription from Delphi (*CII* no. 711, 119BCE) with Jewish names.<sup>119</sup> These provide evidence at most that some Diaspora Jews did visit pagan temples. However, as Phua admits, it is not clear whether the visitors were practising Jews or apostates who had abandoned the Jewish religion. How can these findings be regarded as stances comparable with the "strong's," while the latter still adopt the moral universe of Jewish monotheism? (10:4) Phua's own citation of the example of Philo's nephew Tiberius Julius Alexander<sup>120</sup> illustrates my point:

Thus, Tiberius may still regard himself a Jew, although others would most probably consider him an apostate. His involvement or participation in the worship of Egyptian

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<sup>117</sup> Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 115.

<sup>118</sup> Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 116-7.

<sup>119</sup> Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 118.

<sup>120</sup> Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 120-3.

deities as well as the ruler cult shows him to be disregarding his ancestral tradition of worshipping the one true God of the Jews.<sup>121</sup>

Because of the existence of this apostate Jew Tiberius in Diaspora, it is not clear whether those Jews who frequently visited pagan temples were accommodating Jews or actually apostates against their ancient faith. Thus, it is dubious to regard their stance as parallels of the belief of the “strong” group who do not regard themselves, nor are they regarded by others, as apostates.

The second main category of problems I observe in Phua’s interpretations is his interpretation of 1 Corinthians.

First, Phua has pointed out the significance of Paul identifying the rock in the wilderness with Christ in 10:4 :

For Paul, ‘Christ’ is the one with whom the Corinthians have entered into a covenant (cf. 1 Cor 11:25). And by identifying the ‘rock’ with Christ, Paul is stretching his language in order to show the parallels between the Israelites in the wilderness and the ‘strong’.<sup>122</sup> However, the Lord’s Supper reveals that Christ gives us things both for eating and drinking, but the rock in the OT was just a spring of water, not the source of manna or other food. This may break the parallel of past Israelite experience and the present “strong’s.”

Secondly, although Phua notes that the slogan in 10:23 is also seen in 6:12,<sup>123</sup> he does not explain why the “strong” hold the same attitude to sexual issues (6:12) as that of eating idol-meat, or whether they are in fact representing two different groups of people who use similar freedom principles on different issues.

My final disagreement is with Phua’s interpretation of 1 Cor 10:25-30. He has argued that one reason why the “strong” will eat the idol food in the temple is that they believe “all things come from the one God, which obviously includes food, even idol-meat. And since idols are nothing and insignificant, and since God is the one God who has created all things, it is perfectly all right for the ‘strong’ to eat idol-meat.”<sup>124</sup> Paul’s biblical quotation in 10:26 seems to reaffirm this partial truth. However, several questions naturally arise: why does Paul *reaffirm* their faults after the long painstaking correction he developed in 10:1-22? How

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<sup>121</sup> Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 123.

<sup>122</sup> Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 159.

<sup>123</sup> Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, n.235 in p.171.

<sup>124</sup> Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 133.

can Paul be so sure that his reassuring attitude in 10:26 will not mislead the “strong” again in eating idol food and committing idolatry in other situations? Why is it necessary for Paul to add this scenario at the end of the discussion which seems to be self-defeating to his previous arguments in 10:1-22? Other-regard or “anti-legalism” seems to be insufficient to resolve the above exegetical questions about eating idol meat unknowingly in a private banquet.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Phua only slightly touches about 10:25-30 in his conclusion. See Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 206-7.

## Chapter 2

# The Literary Integrity of 1 Cor 5-11:1

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In this chapter, I will argue that Paul intends 1 Cor 5-11:1 to be regarded as one unit instead of two independent discourses. Moreover, it is suggested that new insights will emerge if 1 Cor 8-11:1 is read in the light of 1 Cor 5-7, demonstrating that there are intra-textual echoes between them. Finally, some overlooked themes are shared in both 1 Cor 5-7 and 1 Cor 8-11:1.

Margaret Mary Mitchell has pointed out the literary unity of 1 Cor 5-11:1. Her findings on the parallels between 1 Cor 5-7 and 1 Cor 8-11:1 can be taken as a starting point.<sup>126</sup> They can be roughly divided into two categories: linguistic and thematic parallels.

In terms of linguistic parallels:

1. Both exhortations concerning sexual immorality and eating food sacrificed for idols share the same goal of “glorifying God.” (6:20; 10:31);<sup>127</sup>
2. There are repeated serious imperatives: flee from sexual immorality Φεύγετε τὴν πορνείαν (6:18) and flee from idolatry φεύγετε ἀπὸ τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας (10:14).<sup>128</sup>

In terms of thematic parallels:

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<sup>126</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 225-228, in particular, n.213 in p.225. However, she strongly argues that all issues mentioned in 1 Cor 5-11:1 are practices threatening the unity of the church. I will show that this assertion is not correct.

<sup>127</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 226.

<sup>128</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 227.

1. Sexual immorality and idolatry are juxtaposed in the vice-list 5:11, 6:9, and in the midst of the story of the ancient Israelites in 10:7-8. “Even in Paul’s self-exemplification in chap. 9, the issues of marriage and eating and drinking are combined (9:4-5).”<sup>129</sup> In other words, whenever Paul mentions sexual immorality in 1 Cor 5-7, he presumes that principle should also apply to idolatry, and vice versa in 1 Cor 8-11:1. Paul inherits the tradition of treating these two issues in a similar manner to the Tanakh.<sup>130</sup>
2. Both pericopes are developed under the overarching theme of individual choice: ἐξουσία / ἐλεύθερος.<sup>131</sup>
3. Both are concerned with a proper relation between the Corinthian church and outsiders.<sup>132</sup>
4. Paul mentions himself as an example for ethical instruction (5:12; 6:15; 7:7-8 [25, 40]; 8:13; 9:1-27; 10:33—11:1).<sup>133</sup>
5. The summary argument of 10:23-11:1 recalls the principles already mentioned in 6:12-20. Both urge believers to renounce personal rights for the common good and the glory of God.<sup>134</sup>

Besides the evidence pointed out by Mitchell, I observe one further bracket construction that hints at Paul’s intention of regarding these six chapters as one literary unit: 1 Cor 5-11:1 is

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<sup>129</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 226.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, n.216 and n.219 in p.226.

<sup>131</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 226.

<sup>132</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 227.

<sup>133</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 227.

<sup>134</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 227.

bracketed by Paul's explicit exhortations to the Corinthians to imitate him: μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε (4:16) and μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε καθὼς καὶ ἡμεῖς Χριστοῦ (11:1).

Based on the literary evidence observed by Mitchell, there are further linguistic parallels found between 1 Cor 5-7 and 1 Cor 8-11:1. These function as literary signs that help us interpret some texts in 1 Cor 8-11:1 in the light of the linked verses in 1 Cor 5-7. I have found echoes of 1 Cor 5-7 in 1 Cor 8-11:1. Moreover, further thematic parallels are found between 1 Cor 5-7 and 1 Cor 8-11:1. Drawing together intra-textual echoes and thematic parallels, Paul's unitary design of 1 Cor 5-11:1 is more clearly perceived.

## **2.1 Linguistic Parallels Between 1 Cor 5-7 and 1 Cor 8-11:1**

There are many words or phrases in 1 Cor 5-7 that are also found in 1 Cor 8-11:1. As they appear in different contexts and so are sometimes translated differently, biblical scholars often overlook this repetition. I will begin with the two key terms ἐξουσία and ἐλεύθερος, which Mitchell regards as identical terms which provide an overarching theme for 1 Cor 5-11:1. Through further literary analysis of these two terms, however, some nuanced different meanings between them have been found.

### **2.1.1 ἐλεύθερος 7:21 -22, 39 // 9:1, 19: Total Renunciation**

In 1 Cor 7, Paul exhorts slaves to make use of opportunities to gain their freedom (ἐλεύθερος) and states a widow's freedom to remarry, only in the Lord. In 1 Cor 9, Paul strikingly applies these two statuses, one social and the other marital, to himself: the first rhetorical question "Am I not free?" in 9:1 is followed immediately by the second question "Am I not an apostle?" These two connected questions link to 9:5, where the terms "apostle" and their rights to be accompanied by a sister or wife are mentioned together again. In other words, the rhetorical question "Am I not free?" in 9:1 can be regarded as the shorthand of "Am I not free [to

marry]?” Paul has mentioned a similar freedom of widows in 7:39 to marry again, but only in the Lord. Now it also applies to himself but he gives up his own freedom to get married. Similarly, Paul mentions his renunciation of freedom for all men, making himself a slave to all in 9:19, which echoes his encouragement of slaves’ freedom in 7:21.

While the freedom for widows to marry insiders and for a slave to avoid certain hardships (cf. parallel of freedom/freedman in v.21 and v.22)<sup>135</sup> suggested in 1 Cor 7 seems to be granted to Christians, it was shown that in 1 Cor 9 this “freedom” is pen-ultimate and dispensable. There are some higher goals to justify Christ’s followers laying down all these presumed freedoms.

### **2.1.2 ἐξουσιάζω 7:4\*2// ἐξουσία 8:9, 9:4-6, 12\*2, 18: Conditional Use of Authority**

In 7:4, the present active indicative verb ἐξουσιάζω is generally interpreted as “a right / authority to have sex with [someone].”<sup>136</sup> 7:4 refers to conjugal rights or “authority over one’s own body.” Paul states that “the wife does not have authority over her body but her husband does; likewise the husband does not have authority over his body but his wife does.” If we put it back in the context of 7:1-5 with emphasis on sexual relations, it is clear that it denotes the sexual rights the wife demanded from her husband and vice versa in the context

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<sup>135</sup> In my new interpretation of 7:21-23 in section 6.4.2, I will show that 7:21 does not refer to manumission of slaves.

<sup>136</sup> This verb occurs only in two verses in the whole 1 Cor: 6:12 and 7:4. In the context of 6:12, *τινος* is probably translated as “anything” rather than “anyone” because of the preceding phrase *πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν*. Thus, the future passive verb *ἐξουσιασθήσομαι* in 6:12 carries negative connotation “being dominated” and so its meaning is different from the same present active verb in 7:4 in which it carries neutral connotation and its subject refers to a specific person.



of marriage. In other words, it means that “married couples are indebted to one another sexually.”<sup>137</sup>

This understanding makes a sharp distinction between sexual relations within marriage and the sexual relations with prostitutes that Paul mentions in 6:12-20: while prostitution is illicit and self-gratifying for men, sexual relations within marriage are for the other partner and mutually edifying. This is the critical weakness of May’s *‘The Body for the Lord’* that I have mentioned in section 1.3. Fitzmyer rightly articulates the core teaching of Paul about marital life in the following:

Paul, however, emphasizes the value of Christian marriage, in which the physical body (soma) of the husband or wife is meant for marital intercourse with the spouse, as his Jewish heritage based on Gen 2:24 recognized. *It thus seeks to eliminate all selfishness* from this aspect of marital life. [italics mine]<sup>138</sup>

“Being indebted to one another” is then a characteristic of sexual intercourse within marriage which sets it apart from other illicit self-gratifying sexual intercourse.<sup>139</sup>

This concept of “right/authority” is expounded and made explicit in 1 Cor 8-11:1 in another context concerning eating food sacrificed to idols. In 8:9-10, Paul states the surrender of one’s rights on eating food for the sake of weak brothers. In 1 Cor 9 Paul states that there are three rights that he is supposed to have: the right to food and drink (9:4),

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<sup>137</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 279. Cf. Richard A. Horsley, *1 Corinthians* (ANTC; Nashville : Abingdon Press, 1998), 96-7.

<sup>138</sup> Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 280.

<sup>139</sup> We will not discuss the meaning of ἐξουσία in 7:37, for it is difficult for us to identify the issue Paul addresses in 7:36-40 at this moment. However, this unknown factor does not affect the conclusion stated above. In section 6.4.3, I will interpret 7:36-38 and the meaning of ἐξουσία in 7:37 will be clear.

getting married (9:5) and earning a living through the gospel (9:6, 12, 18). Paul expounds in most detail on his third right in 1 Cor 9 with a main theme of “for others,” but here the *other* is not one’s spouse or weak brothers, but the target audience of Paul’s evangelical mission.

In sum, Paul associates “freedom” (ἐλευθερος) with social and marital status in order to teach the Corinthians a total renunciation of their freedom for higher goals; however, he uses “authority” (ἐξουσία) language to teach Corinthians about exercising their rights, *not* in absolute renunciation, but being subject to the spiritual well-beings of other brothers. These two aspects, total renunciation of freedom and exercise of authority with specific restraints, are the main lessons of Paul concerning eating food sacrificed to idols in 1 Cor 8-11:1. Yet, it has been shown that the ground of these two notions in 1 Cor 8-11:1 has already been established in the teaching about freedom (in choosing partners and avoiding certain hardships of being a slave) and proper use of one’s authority in marriage in 1 Cor 7.

### **2.1.3 φυσióω, ἀγάπη and γνῶσις 4:18-5:2//8:1-3: Against Social Evaluation**

I have observed some evidence which indicates that 1 Cor 8:1-3 echoes 1 Cor 4:18-5:2. The first is the verb “puff up” φυσióω (4:19; 5:2; 8:1) which never appears between 5:2 and 8:1. The second is the noun “love” ἀγάπη (4:21; 8:1). Similar to the verb “puff up”, the noun “love” is never used between 4:21 and 8:1 even in the discourse about marriage. The third is the key word “know / knowledge” (γινώσκω / γνῶσις) which appears repeatedly in every verse of 8:1-3. Again, the last time that Paul has used this word in this letter is 4:19 and then it is not used again until 8:1-3.

These words “puff up” (φυσióω), “love” (ἀγάπη) and “know / knowledge” (γινώσκω / γνῶσις) are key words in both 4:18-5:2 and 8:1-3, while none of them exists in between. 8:1-3 is Paul’s criticism of the Corinthian audience. Before 1 Cor 8, the nearest similar

satirical rebuke against them is 1 Cor 4:18-5:2,<sup>140</sup> so it is reasonable to conclude that the appearance of these three words in 4:18—5:2 and then their reappearance in 1 Cor 8:1-3 is not coincidental. Paul seems to intend to set these three words in 8:1-3 as overt literary signs to help the audience recall his nearest similar accusation against them in 4:18—5:2.

These literary signs help us understand what the phrase “knowledge puffs up” in 8:1b means. As I will show later in this study, the real case mentioned in 5:1 links knowledge, love and arrogance together: they *boast* of their embrace towards this incestuous union that is based on their knowledge of romantic love in the society.<sup>141</sup> As a result, “you are arrogant (πεφυσιωμένοι) and have not rather mourned!” (1 Cor 5:2) Paul has shown that this kind of knowledge of love cannot edify the errant Christian but rather endangers the spirit of the church (1 Cor 5:5).

Paul thus applies this same principle to the issue of food sacrificed to idols. 8:1-3 is properly understood in this way. Below is my own translation from Greek with my interpretation in [brackets] :

Concerning the issue of food sacrificed to idols, we know that “we all have knowledge.”

But [as I have pointed out in 1 Cor 5: just as your knowledge according to social evaluation leads you in making a wrong judgment towards incestuous union, now]

knowledge [according to social evaluation of idol meals] will *also* makes you puff up [and

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<sup>140</sup> From the outset, the rhetorical question in 1 Cor 6:2b (are you incompetent to try petty disputes?) addressed to the Corinthian leaders also appears as a similar rebuke. But the preceding words in 6:2a and the ensuing questions in 6:3 is Paul’s reminder of their authority of judging the world in 6:3. Thus, the main problem there, according to Paul, is that they had underestimated their own judging authority rather than being “puffed up.” Concerning Paul’s rebuke against the two brothers who initiated lawsuits in 6:7, they could at most be blamed for lacking love rather than being arrogant.

<sup>141</sup> See chapter 4, section 4.3 of this study.

commit wrong judgement.] Only love [in spirit and gentleness ἐν ἀγάπῃ πνεύματί τε πραΰτητος (1 Cor 4:21)] builds up. If anyone who presumes to know anything—[making right evaluations of idol meals], he has not yet known he ought to know—[the biblical evaluation of idol meals.] But if anyone loves God, this person is known by Him—[being evaluated highly by Him.]

Thus, 8:1-3 is Paul's introduction of his ensuing long discourse which subverts the Corinthians' past social values tagged in food sacrificed to idols into God's evaluation of eating food sacrificed to idols. The "knowledge" here consistently refers to evaluation, either a biblical evaluation that Paul advocates or a social evaluation that Paul seeks to reject. At the beginning of these three verses Paul has prepared the readers to pay attention to his correction of their assumed evaluations of idol meals. This interpretation reveals Paul's design of 8:1-3 as an introduction to his teaching about food sacrificed to idols from 8:4 to 11:1.

#### **2.1.4 δουλόω 7:15 // 9:19 : Bringing Salvation to Outsiders**

In section 2.1.1, the connection of 9:19 and 7:21-22, 39 on the key term ἐλεύθερος has been noted. It is observed that 9:19 is linked to another verse in 1 Cor 5-7 through this verb δουλόω. The striking characteristic of the present link δουλόω is that this verb is found *only* in these two verses in the whole Epistle of 1 Corinthians. Thus, it is worth exploring the meaning and significance of this verb which exists *only* in these two contexts.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> The noun δοῦλος exists in 7:21-23 and 12:13. In both cases, it refers to the literal meaning of social status "slave" and is not for metaphorical usage.

#### 2.1.4.1 7:15 Hope for Household Salvation

7:15 is usually regarded as the Pauline privilege on divorce and remarriage: believers are free to remarry if their unbelieving spouses seek the dissolution of marriage. Craig Keener's interpretation is a typical representation of this view:

Paul addresses the specific situation not addressed in Jesus' general principle that he has just cited (7:10–11): the innocent party is free to remarry (see comment on 7:12–13). "Not under bondage" or "not bound" alludes to the wording of Jewish divorce documents, which told the woman, "You are free to remarry any man," and further applied to divorce the precise language of freedom from slavery. Being "bound" would mean that she was still married in God's sight; not being "bound," or being "free," meant that she was free to remarry.<sup>143</sup>

However, this interpretation does not make sense for the ensuing text. If Paul really grants them permission to remarry, why does he keep on urging the believers to have hope for the salvation of their spouses (7:16)?<sup>144</sup> And why does he say "*Rather* (ὁὐ) God has called us

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<sup>143</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary : New Testament* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994), 467; cf. Craig S. Keener, *1-2 Corinthians* (NCBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 65.

<sup>144</sup> Scholars who hold the view of Pauline privilege to divorce usually take 7:16 as Paul's negative rather than optimistic view of saving the unbelieving spouse: "for how do you know, wife, whether you can save your husband..." See Rikard Roitto, "Act as a Christ-believer, as a Household Member or as Both?—A Cognitive Perspective on the Relationship between the Social Identity in Christ and Household Identities in Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Texts," in *Identity Formation in the New Testament*, 141-61. [n.19 in p.146] This pessimistic reading of 7:16, however, is contrary to Paul's affirmation of the unbelieving spouse being sanctified through one's believing spouse in 7:14 and Paul's emphasis on peace instead of freedom in 7:15c. See C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 167. Barrett points out that the verb 'save' here is a 'missionary term': "Thus to retreat from a (possibly difficult) mixed marriage would be to withdraw from a missionary situation, in which at least a reasonable possibility existed of achieving the salvation

to peace,” right after his endorsement of remarriage? In other words, it is evident that in the ensuing text 7:15c-16, Paul still assumes that mixed marriage exists and encourages the believing brothers/sisters to maintain their marital relations with their unbelieving spouses.

Apart from the incoherence against the context, stretching the semantic range of “enslaved” so far to the meaning “bound” is another weakness of a “grant-for-remarriage reading.” The Jewish legal document on divorce specifies the language of “bound (δέδεσται)...free” as in 7:39, not “free...enslaved (δεδούλωται)” here in 7:15. The term “enslaved” is seldom used in the context of marriage.<sup>145</sup> Craig Keener admits that this is but Paul’s further application of terms on slavery in marriage instead of the legal terminology of divorce documents.

Keener’s notion of application of terms on slavery can find support from David Instone-Brewer’s research on Jewish divorce certificates in the first century. He argues that in 7:15, Paul denotes freedom from the marriage bond by using this verb δεδούλωται which is usually associated with slavery.<sup>146</sup> He admits that it is an interpretation crux to define the meaning of this phrase οὐ δεδούλωται in 7:15. He also admits that the verb δουλόω is usually reserved for slavery. His main arguments are based on the Jewish tradition in Paul’s times and are cited as follows:

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of another.” See also Wolfgang Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 4 vols., EKKNT 7 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991-2001), 2: 112-28. For a survey of biblical scholarship on the optimistic and pessimistic translation of 7:16, see Robert L. Plummer, *Paul’s Understanding of the Church’s Mission: Did the Apostle Paul Expect the Early Christian Communities to Evangelize?* (Paternoster Biblical Monographs; Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), n. 74 in pp.93-4.

<sup>145</sup> See also Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 145-6.

<sup>146</sup> David Instone-Brewer, “1 Corinthians 7 in the Light of the Jewish Greek and Aramaic Marriage and Divorce Papyri,” *TynBul* 52.2 (2001): 225-43.

1. He quotes a divorce deed from a Jewish inhabitant of Masada in AD 72 to show that Paul cites a standard Jewish divorce contract and applies the wording and principle to a Christian woman in 1 Cor 7:39.
2. The release of a divorced Jewish woman to remarry is comparable with the emancipation of a slave in ancient Judaism, for biblical support of divorce in Judaism is based on Exod 21:10-11 where it mentions the release of a slave's wife, "and they [early rabbinic traditions] found many parallels between the release of a woman from marriage and the release from slavery."<sup>147</sup> [mGit. 1:4ff; bKidd. 13b]
3. Thus, Paul inherits this Jewish tradition and uses this phrase associated with slavery to denote freedom for remarriage, just as another verb ἀφίημι in 7:11-13 for divorce, while it is also often used for release from slavery.<sup>148</sup>

Instone-Brewer then concludes:

When Paul says they are 'no longer enslaved', any first century reader would understand him to mean that they can remarry, because they would think of the words in both Jewish and non-Jewish divorce certificates: 'You are free to remarry.'<sup>149</sup>

Instone-Brewer's argument for the phrase "not enslaved" (οὐ δεδούλωται) in 7:15a with the equivalent meaning of "no longer bound and therefore free to remarry" is unconvincing in the first century world. First, neither the verb "enslaved" nor the phrase "not enslaved" is

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<sup>147</sup> Instone-Brewer, "1 Corinthians 7 in the Light of the Jewish Greek and Aramaic Marriage and Divorce Papyri," 239.

<sup>148</sup> This is my summary of Instone-Brewer's arguments in "1 Corinthians 7 in the Light of the Jewish Greek and Aramaic Marriage and Divorce Papyri," 237-41.

<sup>149</sup> Instone-Brewer, "1 Corinthians 7 in the Light of the Jewish Greek and Aramaic Marriage and Divorce Papyri," 241.

present in the Aramaic Divorce deed in Masada in AD 72 quoted by Instone-Brewer. It can at most show literary parallels of this Jewish divorce deed in 1 Cor 7:39b, where Paul states clearly the condition of remarriage i.e. if the husband dies. There is no literary parallel with 1 Cor 7:15. Second, the critical drawback of Instone-Brewer's argument is that Paul in 7:15-16 emphasises the applicability of his teaching to both brothers and sisters: "*the brother or sister* is not enslaved...*Wife*, how do you know...*Husband*, how do you know..." This is not confined to women only. However, all evidence suggested by Instone-Brewer to relate divorce with release from slavery is confined to the divorce of *women* only in Jewish tradition. This is true in the Divorce Deed in Masada, in Exod 21:10-11 and 1 Cor 7:39 as well as in, for instance, the practice of levirate marriage. Instone-Brewer suggests that Jewish women may need this divorce deed to avoid levirate marriage and keep their rights of widowhood,<sup>150</sup> but this practice is never applicable to Jewish men in the Jewish tradition. So, how can we impose this Jewish tradition of "releasing from slavery for marriage confined to Jewish women" on Paul's teaching about marriage for both Christian men and women? Instone-Brewer's evidence does not lend support to his own conclusion. While his research on divorce deeds support the idea that the verb "leave" (ἀφίημι) refers to divorce in the context of marriage, I cannot find similar support for "not enslaved" being referred to as "no longer bound" in the context of marriage. In first century literature concerning marriage, there are simply no parallels showing that the phrase "not enslaved" can be metaphorically interpreted as "no longer bound in the marriage." If we still insist on this interpretation for 1 Cor 7:15, it would be seen as an awkward Pauline usage.

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<sup>150</sup> Instone-Brewer, "1 Corinthians 7 in the Light of the Jewish Greek and Aramaic Marriage and Divorce Papyri," 238.



Instead of interpreting 7:15 as a license to remarriage, Will Deming's suggestion is deemed a preferable alternative interpretation, considering the semantic usage of the verb "enslaved (δεδούλωται)" and its relation to the surrounding context:

Between verses 15a and 15b, however, there is no connecting particle, and as I have suggested above, verse 15a seems to require no explanation. Beyond this, since the topic of slavery comes up again in 7:21-3, there is sufficient reason to believe that 7:15b introduces what follows rather than concludes what precedes.<sup>151</sup>

Later, Deming further explains the implication of this nuanced division of 7:15:

Paul proposes this "peace" rather than "freedom" as the alternative to slavery. Since the Corinthians evidently saw their marriages to unbelievers as a form of slavery, they would naturally think of freedom the solution to their problem, in terms of divorce or separation from their spouses. Paul's first inclination, therefore, is to promote marital peace, not emancipation.<sup>152</sup>

Thus, 7:15b "οὐ δεδούλωται ὁ ἀδελφὸς ἢ ἡ ἀδελφὴ ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις" is not a further explanation of the meaning of the previous worst case scenario of mixed marriage: the unbelieving partner separates. Paul starts a new paragraph with this phrase in 7:15b to encourage both brothers and sisters to evaluate *positively* their marriage to unbelieving spouses: this marital relationship itself is not slavery, it is God's call to promote marital peace.

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<sup>151</sup> Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 147. See Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 147-48, where Deming cites strong evidence to show that it is common for philosophers in the Hellenistic world to judge marriage negatively as slavery.

<sup>152</sup> Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 151.

Reading 7:15 in this way, the verb δουλόω in the *negative perfect passive voice* in 7:15b does not indicate any privilege for remarriage. This interpretation (of privileging remarriage) not only lacks support from the first century historical context, it also misplaces Paul's purpose of persuasion here: he is addressing the evaluation of marriage in the society. Paul is making a subversive statement starting from οὐ δεδούλωται in 7:15b and ending in 7:16, and the subversive force is grounded in their new faith in Christ that brings salvation: you are not enslaved in your mixed marriage; you (brother or sister) can bring salvation to your unbelieving spouse and achieve the marital peace to which God calls you.

Secondly, the contrast of the pair of verbs δουλόω (at the beginning of 7:15b) and σώζω (at the end of 7:16) is noteworthy. Instone-Brewer has briefly mentioned the correlation of Paul's discourse in 1 Cor 7 with the common negative evaluation of marriage in the society:

Paul is emphasizing throughout 1 Corinthians 7 that the marriage bond is to be respected and not treated lightly, as in Graeco-Roman culture, so he deliberately uses language and images which have connotations of a slavery-type bond. It is therefore to be expected that he would use the word δουλόω in verse 15...with a marriage where one partner has been forced into a situation they do not want.<sup>153</sup>

If Instone-Brewer is correct, the *negation* of "enslaved", which Paul stresses in the matter of mixed marriage, is his reminder to brothers or sisters of the fact that marriage is *not* slavery whether you are forced into it or not. Instead it is God's call (7:15c). Their own conversion, which probably took place after marriage, may change the marriage into a mixed marriage but not into slavery. A brother or sister should perceive his or her existing mixed marriage as an opportunity for household salvation instead of slavery: believers may bring salvation to their spouses in the future if they retain their marital relationship (7:16). By using this negative

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<sup>153</sup> Instone-Brewer, "1 Corinthians 7 in the Light of the Jewish Greek and Aramaic Marriage and Divorce Papyri," 240-41.

phrase οὐ δεδούλωται at the beginning of v.15b and the verb σώζω at the end of v.16, Paul subverts their perspective by replacing a negative picture of slavery with a hopeful picture of household salvation within marriage.

#### 2.1.4.2 9:19-23 Casting out Mission of Saving Some

Although it is not exactly parallel, Paul mentions again the purpose of “winning” somebody to Christ” in 9:19 in terms of the cause “I make myself a slave to all.” (πᾶσιν ἑμαυτὸν ἐδούλωσα) Here the same verb δουλόω is expressed as a first person singular *positive active* voice, not a *negative passive* voice in 7:15b. Six ἵνα-clauses are repeated in 9:19-22 to qualify Paul’s statement “I have made myself a slave to all.”

If 7:15b-16 is taken as an intertext of 9:19-23, the marital relationship between a believer and unbeliever will then shed light on our understanding of 9:19-23. *Contra* David Horrell, we should not regard Paul as demanding “a chameleon-like flexibility” of those under the law, outside the law and the weak for the sake of not causing offence to them.<sup>154</sup> After all, he does not demand the converted married brother or sister to be a chameleon-like undercover to their unbelieving spouse. In the light of Paul’s previous teachings on the radical distinctiveness of converted Christian lives (cf. 6:11 and “body for the Lord” in 6:13-17), in 7:16 Paul seems to encourage brothers or sisters in a mixed marriage to live out the converted virtuous life in Christ in order to bring their unbelieving spouse to Christ.

Paul’s “winning” statements in 9:19-23 carry similar purpose and force. David Horrell suggests reading 10:32-33 as a key to decode the meaning of Paul’s metaphor “slave to all” in 9:19-23. As a result, he suggests that Paul’s main thrust in 9:19-23 is to promote a

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<sup>154</sup> David Horrell, “Idol-Food, Idolatry and Ethics in Paul,” in *Idolatry: False Worship in the Bible, Early Judaism and Christianity* (Stephen C. Barton ed.; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 120-140. [p.136]

harmonious relationship with everyone and avoid offending each other. Thus, he comes to his notion of “chameleon-like flexibility” of the Christian community as a conclusion.<sup>155</sup> A nuanced examination, however, does not support his notion. There is no literary link of 10:32 with the discussion in 9:19-23. Rather, there are many literary links on the verb “freedom” that show the continuity of 9:19 with the preceding context 9:1-18. In the light of the preceding context 8:13-9:18, Paul urges the knowers (cf. 8:7) to lay down their own freedom of eating idol food with outsiders in the temple for the salvation of weak brothers—not going back to previous idolatrous practice. The key reminder is to avoid leading insiders astray, *not* to avoid offending outsiders. It is then strange to regard Paul’s metaphor “making myself slave to all” as appeasing outsiders. Moreover, Paul concludes in 9:23 that the overall purpose is that he might become a co-worker (συγκοινωνός) with the personified gospel, *not* with outsiders. The key mission Paul stresses in “winning” and “partner of the personified gospel” is to bring outsiders to become like Paul himself or his expectation of the knowers in the church—being aligned with the gospel. In other words, Paul’s metaphor “slave to all” should be decoded by his understanding of the gospel and the purpose of laying down one’s freedom throughout 1 Cor 9.<sup>156</sup>

Like a brother or sister who is called into peaceful and loving relations with his or her spouse (7:15c), Paul seeks, by all means, to retain the existing social relations with the outsiders instead of encouraging social ostracism against the outside world (cf. 5:9). However, just as Paul expects a believing spouse to bring salvation to an unbelieving spouse, the emphasis of his repeated phrase “I became...” here in 9:19-23 does not denote

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<sup>155</sup> Horrell, “Idol-Food, Idolatry and Ethics in Paul,” 135-6.

<sup>156</sup> The significance of these six purpose clauses of “winning” together with the seventh purpose clause in v.23 (“so that I may become its partner”) in understanding 1 Cor 9 will be fully expounded in chapter 6, section 6.5.3.

accommodation or endorsement to outsiders' behaviours and values, but instead a call for a constant virtuous life and loving kindness ("under the law of Christ" in 9:21) to win outsiders for the gospel.

10:25-30 is a good demonstration of what Paul means in "to X, I become X, so as to win X." 10:25-30 is usually taken as an instance of Paul's compromise on eating idol food. However, this understanding overlooks the social context and so underestimates the social consequence of one practising Paul's instructions in 10:28-29. On the one hand, the believer retains eating with outsiders (10:27). On the other, in an honour-and-shame oriented Mediterranean culture, the rejection of eating the food served by the host (once it is declared as food sacrificed to gods) functions as a slap in the face of the host, an act that overtly shames him. Unlike a marketing agent selling items to clients, therefore, Paul's language of winning unbelievers for the gospel does not imply any sense of accommodating oneself with unbelievers' preferences. The meaning of "ἀπρόσκοποι" in 10:32 is better translated as "being blameless" instead of "giving no offence", and καθὼς καὶ γὼ πάντα πᾶσιν ἀρέσκω in 10:33a should then be taken as a synonymous expression of μὴ ζητῶν τὸ ἐμαυτοῦ σύμφορον in 10:33b instead of being taken as a general principle of political correctness.<sup>157</sup>

### 2.1.5 Other Key Words or Phrases

There are other key words or phrases that cluster in 1 Cor 5—11:1:

ἀνάγκην 7:26, 37 // 9:16

καλέω 7:15, 17, 18\*2, 20, 21, 22\*2, 24 // 10:27 (This verb also frequently appears outside 1 Cor 5—11:1)

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<sup>157</sup> More details of Paul's rhetorical purpose of quoting LXX Ps 23:1 in 10:26 will be explored in chapter 5.

Πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν 6:12\*2 // Πάντα ἔξεστιν 10:23\*2

εἰδωλολάτραις 5:10-11, 6:9 // 10:7

πόρνοις / πορνεία / πορνεύω 5:1\*2, 9-11; 6:9, 13, 18; 7:2 // πορνεύω 10:8\*2

σῶμα 5:3; 6:13\*2, 15, 16, 18\*2, 19, 20; 7:4\*2, 34 // 9:27; 10:16, 17 (this word also frequently appears outside 1 Cor 5—11:1)

From these numerous examples of keywords that cluster only in 1 Cor 5—11:1 which are absent elsewhere (with the exception of καλέω and σῶμα) and the intra-textual echoes discussed above, it is reasonable to conclude that Paul intends 1 Cor 5-7 and 1 Cor 8-11:1 to be read together which enables the later pericope to be understood in the light of the former.

## 2.2 Thematic Parallels

While Mitchell notes the frequent use of the personal example of Paul to urge the Corinthians to follow,<sup>158</sup> Paul also warns them to be alert to the serious consequence of bad examples. Besides, there are other thematic parallels between 1 Cor 5-7 and 1 Cor 8-11:1 and these themes are absent in other parts of 1 Corinthians. They further highlight the literary unity of these six chapters.

### 2.2.1 1 Cor 5 and 10: Past and Present

Paul identifies the history of the Corinthian church with ancient Israel in 1 Cor 5 and 10. Paul commands “us” the church in 5:7-8 to celebrate the Passover Festival which originally refers to the ancient Israelites. The purpose of this identification is to give warnings to the Corinthian audience. This rhetoric of identification is repeated in 1 Cor 10:1-12. Ancient Israelites are identified as “our” fathers. In 10:1-5, Paul uses the Christian rite of baptism and the image of

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<sup>158</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 49-50.

the Lord's Supper to describe the exodus of ancient Israel. In the end, it raises a warning to the audience: if the church repeats the sins of ancient Israelites which include partaking in idol meals, they will face a destiny of destruction similar to that of their ancient Israelite fathers (10:1, 6, 11-12). This metaphorical identification and warning against imitating bad models of ancient Israelites echo 5:7-8.<sup>159</sup>

Second, there is one more similarity that links 1 Cor 5 and 10: the sudden identification of Christ with a key character in the exodus event. In 5:7, Paul oddly identifies Christ with the paschal lamb in the Passover of Ancient Israel; in 1 Cor 10, Paul oddly identifies Christ with the rock (v.4) and with Yahweh (v.9) who led the ancient Israelites out of Egypt and journeyed with them in the wilderness. Both times, the identifications are asserted by Paul without further explanation. Such identifications are seldom found in the Jewish literature or other contemporary classic literature of antiquity. This rarity further shows Paul's intention of linking 1 Cor 5 and 10 together with a close association with the story of Israel.

### **2.2.2 Echoes of Deuteronomy**

The second common feature of 1 Cor 5-11:1 is the high volume of echoes of Deuteronomy in every chapter:

5:1 γυναῖκά πατρός: this phrase is rare in LXX, only existing in Lev 18:8, 20:11, Deut 23:1 and Deut 27:20.

5:13: quoted from Deut 17:7.

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<sup>159</sup> Cf. Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Interpretation; Louisville : Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 161-2.

6:5: alludes to Deut 1:16.<sup>160</sup>

7:32-35 and 8:5-6: allude to the Shema in Deut 6:4-5, where it stresses undivided devotion to the Lord our God. This is Paul's emphasis in 7:32-35.<sup>161</sup>

9:9: quotes Deut 25:4

10: 20, 22: alludes to Deut 32:17, 21.

Outside 1 Cor 5-11:1, there are seldom quotations from or allusions to Deuteronomy in 1 Corinthians. The only possible allusion of Deuteronomy outside 1 Cor 5-11:1 is Deut 34:10 in 1 Cor 13:12.<sup>162</sup>

It is significant for us to inquire further into the correlation of Paul's ethical instruction in 1 Cor 5-11:1 with Deuteronomy or the Torah in general. In fact, explicit quotations from the Torah in these six chapters are far denser than those outside. Within 1 Cor 5-11:1, there is

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<sup>160</sup> Rosner, *Paul, Scripture & Ethics*, 100-1. Another scholar Sean M. McDonough even makes a bold claim that Paul may structure 1 Cor 5-6 in the light of Deut 17. See McDonough, "Competent To Judge: The Old Testament Connection between 1 Corinthians 5 and 6," *JTS* 56.1 (2005): 99-102.

<sup>161</sup> Rosner, "Deuteronomy in 1 and 2 Corinthians," in *Deuteronomy in the New Testament* (ed. Maarten J.J. Menken and Steve Moyise; LNTS 358; London: T & T Clark International, 2007), 118-35. [p.126]; N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 1991), 126-9.

<sup>162</sup> Rosner has suggested allusions to Deut. 34:10 in 1 Cor 13:12, Deut 15:14 in 1 Cor 16:2 and Deut 31:6, 7, 23 in 1 Cor 16:13. See Rosner, "Deuteronomy in 1 and 2 Corinthians," 132-3. There are two linguistic parallels "know" and "face to face" between Deut 34:10 and 1 Cor 13:12, although the preposition in 1 Cor 13:12 is *πρὸς* while it is *κατὰ* in Deut 34:10. Thus this allusion is controversial, for the linguistic support is weak. Other two suggested allusions are untenable: Deut 15:14 concerns giving money to the slaves, who are, in a literal sense, set free, whereas 1 Cor 16:2 is about giving offerings to the saints. The common word agreement of Deut. 31:6, 7, 23 and 1 Cor 16:13 is just one word *ἀνδρίζομαι*. This word is common in LXX existing not only in Deuteronomy but also in the Book of Joshua.



only one scriptural reference that is not quoted from the Torah: 1 Cor 10:26 from Ps 23:1 (LXX); whereas outside of 1 Cor 5-11:1, there is only one instance that *is* quoted from the Torah: 1 Cor 15:45 from LXX Gen 2:7. This may be a clue for us to trace the underlying logic of Paul in these six chapters from the OT.

### 2.2.3 No Schisms within the Church

In her work *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, Margaret Mary Mitchell has argued that the theme of 1 Corinthians is similar to the deliberative rhetoric from antiquity, designed to persuade the audience of the summary statement in 1 Cor 1:10: no schism—the Corinthian Christians should be united in the same mind and in the same judgment. According to Mitchell, resolving the problem of factionalism within the Corinthian church is the major rhetorical purpose for Paul in writing this letter. She observes that there is a unitary structure in 1 Cor 5-11:1 and painstakingly interprets almost every issue mentioned as divisive to the community. These include the man committing incest in 1 Cor 5:1;<sup>163</sup> the proper mix of the lump of dough as “the symbol of the unified community”;<sup>164</sup> legal disputes at Corinth that arouse political divisions;<sup>165</sup> the issue of sexual abstinence within marriage in 1 Cor 7:1-7 and divorce in 7:10-11 that cause division of the church;<sup>166</sup> the characterisation of the “strong” and the “weak” in 1 Cor 8 as an indication of factions;<sup>167</sup> as well as translating the word *πρόσκομμα* and its synonym *σκανδαλίζω* into “to give offence” as evidence of factionalism: “Paul’s urging the Corinthians not to offend one another is certainly germane to the issue of

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<sup>163</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 112.

<sup>164</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 113.

<sup>165</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 117.

<sup>166</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 122.

<sup>167</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 126.

factionalism.”<sup>168</sup> Finally, the events of the ancient Israelites quoted in 10:5-10 are related to factionalism because Josephus (in *Ant.* 3:295; 4:12-66; 4:139-40 ) and Philo (in *Posterity* 182-5) described these events as *στάσεις*.<sup>169</sup>

A nuanced exegesis of the text, however, shows that none of her arguments are convincing evidence for factionalism in 1 Cor 5—11:1. The conflicts here are value judgments of Paul against some people in the Corinthian congregation, not conflicts between different groups *within* the church. I have briefly mentioned these errors in the Introduction. In handling the errant Corinthian having sexual relations with his stepmother in 1 Cor 5, the whole congregation declined to discipline him and they were even proud of this tolerance (5:2, 6). The litigation issue is a rivalry between individual brothers (6:5-6). Concluding that this is evidence of divisions between different groups is highly speculative: it is unlikely for groups within the church to be involved in disputes *concerning matters of ordinary life* (*βιωτικὸς* 6:3b-4a). Moreover, the wrong that Paul confronts the church with on this issue is their suspension of judgment against these insiders’ disputes, not their factionalism resulting from taking sides (6:1-3). Marital instructions between couples in the church (7:1-7) are hardly taken as evidence of an issue of schism. Paul’s repeated address to both husband and wife in 7:1-7, 10-11 in symmetric style shows that his instruction focuses on the marital relation *within* the family of the church members, *not* the conflicts between the members.

In 1 Cor 8, the relationship between the “strong” and the “weak” is not as opponents or rivals. Rather, the strong are influential leaders of the weak on the issue of eating idol food.

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<sup>168</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 129.

<sup>169</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, n.441, 444, 445, 448 in pp.139-40.

Their bad influence “encourages” the weak to follow (8:10) and so stumble.<sup>170</sup> Therefore, the strong and weak are not rivals and so no division can be logically deduced from this issue.

Concerning the events of the ancient Israelites quoted in 10:1-11, although Philo’s descriptions in *Posterity* 185 can be translated as factions, none of the works of Josephus cited by Mitchell mention factionalism within the Israelite community. Rather, the cited text refers to the united rebellion of Israelites against Moses’ leadership:

After a brief interval he broke up his camp at Mount Sinai, and, passing certain localities of which we shall speak, came to a place called Esermoth. There the multitude began to *στασιάζειν* once more and to reproach Moses for the trials which they had undergone on these peregrinations. (*Ant.* 3.295 [Thackeray, LCL])

In the light of the context of *Ant.* 3.295, *στασιάζειν* is properly translated as rebellion / mutiny/sedition instead of factionalism based on Josephus’ own definition of factionalism: “each joined the party which he considered would best serve his personal advantage.” (*J.W.* 1.218)<sup>171</sup> According to this definition, it is difficult to find different interests among the Israelites in *Ant.* 3.295 but rather their concerted campaign against the rule of Moses.

Similarly, in Josephus’ reinterpretation of the Baal Peor event in *Ant.* 4.139-54, he emphasises that it is “the whole army” (*παντὸς ἡδὴ τοῦ στρατοῦ*) who committed the *στάσιν* in the Baal Peor incident (*Ant.* 4.140). Zimri, the head of the tribe of Simeon, violated Mosaic Law in this event (*Ant.* 4.141) and described Mosaic Law as tyranny when Moses confronted their wrongdoings (*Ant.* 4.145-9). Even so, the Israelite community sought peace with Zimri

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<sup>170</sup> Cf. Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 87-89, where Cheung rebukes the traditional assumption that there is a dispute between the “strong party” and “weak party” on the issue of eating idol food in 1 Cor 8-11:1.

<sup>171</sup> Quoted by Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 143.

without quarrels (*Ant.* 4.150-1). Only Phineas, and some young men following him, took immediate action to kill the Moabite woman of Zimri and other Moabite women. In *Ant* 4.154, Josephus praised the young men imitating Phineas as men with virtue (ἀρετῆς) and the killing of Phineas as an action of boldness (Φινεέσσου τόλμης). They did the killing out of their respect to Divine Law, not for their own personal interests. Thus, Josephus regards the whole Baal Peor incident as rebellion of the Israelites against God, not a strife between different parties based on conflicts of interests.

Josephus coins the Korah event in Num 16 as στάσιν in *Ant.* 4.12-66. Korah, like Zimri in the later Baal Peor incident, labelled Moses as a tyrant and sought to shift the support of the whole congregation of Israelites from Moses to himself (*Ant.* 4.20, 22-23). It is clear from Josephus' comments on the unrepentant attitude of the remaining Israelites in *Ant.* 4.59-62 that he also regards this Korah event as rebellion, not an event of factionalism between different groups of interest within Israelites.<sup>172</sup>

Similar to Josephus, the united rebellion of the Corinthian church against the will of God is Paul's emphasis in 1 Cor 10:1-11 instead of factionalism amongst them.

Therefore, while there are good indications of divisions stated in 1 Cor 1-4 (1:10; 3:3-4) and 1 Cor 11 (11:18), the Corinthians are quite united in acting against Paul's teachings in 1 Cor 5-11:1. Mitchell's observation and arguments for the literary unity of 1 Cor 5-11:1 is deemed reasonable. However, according to my examination shown above, it appears that none of her references to Corinthian factionalism in these six chapters can stand under scrutiny. Paul

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<sup>172</sup> Philo's retelling of the story of the seduction of the Moabite women in Num 25 in *Posterity* 182-5 is not against factionalism within the Israelites either, but rather a praise of the heroic act of Phineas for executing divine judgment for God against the concerted rebellion of his fellow Israelites. Thus, στάσις in Philo's *Posterity* 182-5 should be translated as "rebellion" and not "factionalism" again.

does not explicitly mention any divisions or quarrels within the Corinthian church in 1 Cor 5-11:1 and thus other rhetorical purposes of Paul in 1 Cor 5-11:1 should be investigated.

## 2.2.4 Satan as an Identity Marker of Sinning Insiders

### 2.2.4.1 Satan as a Symbol of Discipline

There is evidence signalling the close relationship between 1 Cor 5-7 and 1 Cor 8-11:1 and most of this evidence is related to Satan:

1. Though not using the same word, similar wordings addressed to Satan or demonic powers exist in 5:5 (σατανᾶ), 7:5 (σατανᾶς) and 10:20-21 (δαίμονίων).<sup>173</sup>
2. The motif of destruction exists in 1 Cor 5, 8 and 10:
  - 5:5 “deliver this man to Satan for the destruction (ᾧλεθρον) of the flesh” ;
  - 8:11 destruction (ἀπόλλυται) of the weak eating idol food again; and
  - 10:10 the strong may be destroyed by the destroyer (ἀπώλοντο ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀλοθρευτοῦ), like the Israelite ancestors who complained to God.

These two common motifs reveal Paul’s concern about Satan at the beginning (1 Cor 5) and end (1Cor 10) of 1 Cor 5-11:1. They raise a question concerning the literary function of “Satan/demons” and the “destruction” language in 1 Cor 5-11:1.

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<sup>173</sup> It is interesting to note that Paul uses “demons” instead of “Satan” in 10:20-21. Later, I will show that Paul has achieved at least two rhetorical purposes by using the term “demons” in 10:20-21: 1) By changing the term “idol” or “gods” before 10:20 as object of worship in the temple (8:5; 10:19) to “demons” in 10:20-21, Paul evokes the Scripture to rebuke against the fallacy of “many names, but one God” (section 5.6.4); 2) By setting the either-or relation of participation in the table of the Lord and the table of demons, Paul subverts the normal or neutral connotation of “demons” prevalent in the society to a negative provocative act of the Lord to jealousy (end of section 6.5.5).

In order to respond to this question, I begin with a critical analysis of a recent monograph on interpreting the single verse 1 Cor 5:5: David Raymond Smith's *'Hand This Man Over to Satan': Curse, Exclusion and Salvation in 1 Corinthians 5*.<sup>174</sup>

Smith argues that the clause "hand over this person to Satan" in 1 Cor 5:5a is a curse formula which finds parallels both in Jewish tradition and Graeco-Roman culture. Paul expects that this immoral person will be punished by expulsion from the Christian community and by physical suffering that leads to death.

Smith has pointed out that the meaning of the whole verse 5:5 is mainly determined by the interpretation of the first phrase: handing this man over to Satan. Smith then lists ample evidence to support his curse interpretation of 5:5a. Two arguments, one from the Jewish tradition and another from the Graeco-Roman world, are regarded as most convincing. In the Jewish literature, this phrase echoes Job 1:12 and 2:6 where Satan is often depicted as an agent to execute physical destruction.<sup>175</sup> Moreover, the context of 1 Cor 5 is closely related to Deuteronomy. The phrase γυναῖκά πατρός [father's wife] at 5:1 echoes Deut 27, where twelve curses are mentioned.<sup>176</sup> Exclusion is evident in Deuteronomy for those who disobey the law, but the execution of the curses does not consist of exclusion alone. It entails physical destruction and a death sentence on the cursed person after being expelled or as a means of expulsion.<sup>177</sup> From the Graeco-Roman world: Smith finds a striking parallel form of cursing with malevolent consequences from archaeological findings : "Mighty Typhon, I hand

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<sup>174</sup> David Raymond Smith, *'Hand This Man Over to Satan': Curse, Exclusion and Salvation in 1 Corinthians 5* (LNTS 386; London : T&T Clark International, 2008).

<sup>175</sup> Smith, *'Hand This Man Over to Satan'*, 159-61.

<sup>176</sup> Smith, *'Hand This Man Over to Satan'*, 123-6.

<sup>177</sup> Smith, *'Hand This Man Over to Satan'*, 127-8.

over to you Tyche [παραδίδωμί σοι Τύχην], whom Sophia bore, that you may do her harm.”<sup>178</sup>

Smith argues that Paul contextualises this *Defixio* binding curse into his Judaeo-Christian tradition by just changing the name of Tyche to Satan.<sup>179</sup> This strikingly similar form of cursing in the Graeco-Roman world indicates that Paul intends to curse the errant Christian as a means of church discipline. According to this Graeco-Roman *Defixio* “binding” cursing tradition, it also entails physical suffering.<sup>180</sup>

There are many problems raised by Smith’s curse reading (see Excursus 3). However deficient his thesis may be, his proposal is heuristic. From his research on the curse in the Jewish tradition, it is possible to conclude that Paul is familiar with the concept of curse in Deut 27. Smith’s research reminds us of the world view of Paul who regards this world as an open system, where supernatural power can intervene into our physical world through human invocation and can affect our physical well-being. The agent of destruction, however, is God himself and not Satan.

#### **2.2.4.2 Satan as an Identity Marker of Isolated Insiders**

How does Paul classify the various kinds of sinning brothers in 1 Cor 5:11? Are they classified as outsiders or insiders? If they had been regarded as outsiders, according to Paul’s encouragement of keeping social intercourse with outsiders in 5:10 (cf. 10:27), the church members should retain social intercourse with them. However, this is directly contradictory to Paul’s prohibition “do not even eat with them” in 5:11, which entails social isolation of this

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<sup>178</sup> Smith, *‘Hand This Man Over to Satan’*, 158. For the whole binding curse, see Smith, *‘Hand This Man Over to Satan’*, 87-8. It is quoted from D.R. Jordan, “Defixiones From a Well Near the Southwest Corner of the Athenian Agora,” *Hesperia* 54 (1985): 205-55. [pp.252-3]

<sup>179</sup> Smith, *‘Hand This Man Over to Satan’*, 158.

<sup>180</sup> Smith, *‘Hand This Man Over to Satan’*, 76-78.

group from the whole church. Paul encourages insiders, who are brothers and sisters in Christ, to be united and have fellowship in Christ in 1 Cor 1-4 and also encourages them to associate with outsiders, the *πρόνοις* of this world, in 5:10. But to these sinning brothers in 5:11, they are called “*ἔσω ὑμεῖς*” (5:12) and “*πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν*” (5:13). In other words, they are still regarded as members of the church and they should be treated in social isolation. They seem to be classified by Paul as a third category besides normal insiders and outsiders.

This rule of social isolation is also applicable to the errant brother in 5:1 because he is qualified as *πρόνος*, the first kind of sinning brother listed in 5:11. The whole church should execute social ostracism against this errant Christian according to Paul’s rule in 5:11. Paul denotes this errant Christian by Satan language in 5:5, pronouncing judgment and associating his destiny with destruction (5:3-5). Satan has become a symbol of the destiny of the errant brother. As this errant brother belongs to the category of isolated insiders in 5:11, Satan is probably a symbol of those isolated insiders in 5:11 and is not just confined to the errant brother.

These warnings against crossing the line of proper behaviour of Christians are repeated in 1 Cor 8-11:1. In the case of eating food sacrificed to idols, Paul warns them not to be idolaters (10:7). This warning applies to both the knowers<sup>181</sup> reclining in the idol temple and the weak who are “encouraged” to eat idol food (8:10b-11). Both are regarded as having “fellowship with demons” (10:20) and partaking in the table of demons (10:21) as both, for different reasons, eat the idol food in the temple. They are not outsiders, for both the

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<sup>181</sup> In this study, I adopt Alex Cheung’s translation to designate this subgroup within the church mentioned in 1 Cor 8:10 as “knowers” instead of the traditional term the “strong.” It is because it is more faithful to Paul’s wording in 8:10a (*τὸν ἔχοντα γινῶσιν*; cf. 8:4, 7), while the “strong” (*δυνατός*) is absent in 1 Cor 8. This may further highlight a contrast of the issue discussed here against Rom 14-15:13, where strong and weak are mentioned in 15:1. See also Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 117.



knowers and the weak are called brothers (8:11; 10:1) and not gentiles (ἔθνος), where “gentiles” is consistently used in 1 Corinthians as a metaphorical term for outsiders or non-believers instead of non-Jews (1:23; 5:1; 12:2). On the other hand, they are not normal insiders either. This is based on the observation that the weak is further qualified as a “falling brother” (8:13) with the destiny of being destroyed ἀπόλλυται (8:11) and the knowers are qualified as those who sin against Christ (8:12). Their own destiny is also subject to destruction (10:5, 8-10). Summarised from these descriptions, both the weak and the knowers belong to a subgroup within the church. The either-or statement formulated in 10:21 implies that those who partake in the table of demons (no matter whether they are stumbled weak brothers or knowers who stumble the weak) should not be permitted to partake in the Lord’s Supper—another expression of Paul’s command of “not even to eat with them” (5:11). Paul uses Satan language to denote this subgroup of insiders again (demons in 10:21).

In a nutshell, the identity of a subgroup within the church summarised in 5:11 and 10:21 is defined by terms related to Satan/demons and “destruction.” They commit different kinds of sins; all should be socially isolated by the Christian community, although their church membership is still retained.

## 2.3 Conclusion

From the above observation of intra-textual echoes and thematic parallels of 1 Cor 5-7 and 1 Cor 8-11:1, it is reasonable to conclude that Paul intends these six chapters to be read together instead of regarding them as two independent discourses addressed to different issues happening in the Corinthian church. The moral instructions that Paul has given to the Corinthians in 1 Cor 8-11:1 concerning εἰδωλοθύτων find strikingly rich echoes from his own teachings in 1 Cor 5-7 concerning πορνεία. 1 Cor 5-7 sheds light on our understanding of 1 Cor

8-11:1. Paul has put various literary signs for readers to understand it in an intra-textual manner. This shows Paul's purposeful intention and design for readers to read 1 Cor 5-11:1 together as a unit. It indicates that there is hope for figuring out an overall logical flow and theme throughout these six chapters in the light of the Jewish tradition Paul has inherited or shared.

### Excursus 3: Critical Comments on Smith's Arguments for a Curse Reading in 1 Cor 5:5

There are many questions concerning Smith's curse reading, his definition of a curse being: "*a word, form of words, or action that expresses a desire for physical harm to befall another* (that is, when curse is used transitively) which *calls into play a metaphysical power*."<sup>182</sup>

One major problem is the role of Satan implied by his theory of contextualisation of Graeco-Roman Defixio cursing. Smith states: "As one would expect, Paul's understanding of this curse configuration is contextualised within his Judaeo-Christian tradition. Thus, it is not into Tyche's authority that the *πρόρνη* is placed, but into Satan's."<sup>183</sup> First, Smith confuses the object of the curse "Tyche" with the chthonic agent "Mighty Typhon." In the previous paragraph, Smith states clearly that in the curse "the victim ("Tyche") is handed over to "Mighty Typhon" (chthonic agent) to suffer harm."<sup>184</sup> If Paul wants to contextualise this curse, Satan (as an agent of execution) should replace Mighty Typhon, not the victim "Tyche." Second, even if Smith had not made this confusion, another question naturally arises: why does Paul not change the name of Typhon into Christ or God instead of Satan? After all, in the Graeco-Roman curse, Typhon is their object of invocation. According to Smith's own study of the Jewish tradition of imprecatory cursing, "God is explicitly addressed through prayer as the one who will inflict physical suffering in the form of a curse upon another."<sup>185</sup> The citation of Graeco-Roman cursing by Smith is also a form of prayer addressed to their gods "Mighty Typhon." If Paul had contextualised this curse, Paul would have replaced "Typhon"

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<sup>182</sup> Smith, *'Hand This Man Over to Satan'*, 62.

<sup>183</sup> Smith, *'Hand This Man Over to Satan'*, 158.

<sup>184</sup> Smith, *'Hand This Man Over to Satan'*, 158.

<sup>185</sup> Smith, *'Hand This Man Over to Satan'*, 71.

with God the Yahweh or Christ and it would then have perfectly fitted Paul's Judaeo-Christian tradition of "imprecatory" curses. Why does Paul hand over the person to Satan?

One possible explanation is that Smith considers that "Satan...functions as one who causes malevolent consequences in Pauline thought."<sup>186</sup> However, this description can be applied to Yahweh, too. As revealed in 10:1-22, Paul believes that God will destroy his own people for their sin. For instance, Paul mentions twice the verb "destroy" (ἀπόλλυμι) in 1 Cor 10:9-10. The agent who destroys refers to serpents (v.9) and the destroyer ὀλοθρευτής (v.10) respectively. V.9 alludes to the bronze snake event in Num 21:1-9, where the venomous snakes were regarded as agents sent from God, not Satan. Concerning the event Paul refers to in 10:10, it is ambiguous. Besides the bronze snake event, there are only three events in the wilderness that began with grumbling and end up with many deaths of the Israelites. These events are the complaints of hardship in Num 11:1-3, the desire for meat in Num 11:4-6, 31-34 and the rebellion of Korah in Num 16. In all cases, the Israelites were destroyed by a plague which is identified with the wrath of God. Therefore, although there is no agreement on what specific Tanakh passage Paul refers to, the destroyer ὀλοθρευτής never refers to Satan in any of these three events, but to God Himself.<sup>187</sup> Smith's own study of the Jewish tradition has failed to show any evidence which suggests that God has made use of Satan as an agent to punish God's people *for their sinful act*.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Smith, *'Hand This Man Over to Satan'*, 179. Cf. Smith, *'Hand This Man Over to Satan'*, 159-61.

<sup>187</sup> Cf. Wayne A. Meeks, "'And Rose up to Play': Midrash and Paraenesis in 1 Corinthians 10:1-22," *JSNT* 16 (1982): 64-78. [p.68]

<sup>188</sup> According to Smith's own study of curse tradition in Tanakh in pp.57-72, he also agrees that the curse is either self-operative or carried out by God himself. None of the curses for punishing sinful acts is carried out by Satan. On the other hand, Job did suffer physically under Satan but it was not for his sinful act.

In the New Testament, Smith has argued from Acts 5 and 1 Cor 11:29-32 that “within Pauline thought, human sin can lead to physical destruction”<sup>189</sup> and the errant Corinthian’s physical destruction *ὀλεθρος* can be interpreted as “physical suffering (including death) as a consequence of sin.”<sup>190</sup> However, neither of these passages is related to Smith’s notion of “Satan as execution of the curse,” which is the very assumption of his theory of contextualisation of the Graeco-Roman curse.<sup>191</sup>

Another problem is his interpretation of the *ἵνα* clause in 1 Cor 5:5b: “this is for his salvation.” Smith acknowledges that salvation is never a purpose of a curse in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman world.<sup>192</sup> He interprets the correlation of the curse with the salvation purpose as follows:

...in 1 Corinthians 5, the curse does not directly *effect* salvation. Rather, through Satanic agency, the curse is the vehicle by which physical suffering and death is produced—death being the “last enemy”. It is death which prevents the errant Corinthian from sinning further....As such, neither the curse, nor the man’s death is directly salvific.<sup>193</sup>

In other words, Smith argues that the fatal curse of Paul in 5:5 still achieves the purpose of salvation for the spirit of the errant Christian *indirectly* through preventing him from sinning

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<sup>189</sup> Smith, ‘*Hand This Man Over to Satan*’, 167.

<sup>190</sup> Smith, ‘*Hand This Man Over to Satan*’, 174.

<sup>191</sup> Smith adopts Barrett’s interpretation of Acts 5:1-11. Therefore, Satan is depicted as an agent of tempting Ananias and Sapphira to lie, *not* an executioner. See Smith, ‘*Hand This Man Over to Satan*’, 172-4. For 1 Cor 11:29-32, Paul states explicitly that it happened because we are judged *by the Lord* (1 Cor 11:32). There is not any involvement of Satan mentioned in the execution of judgment.

<sup>192</sup> Smith, ‘*Hand This Man Over to Satan*’, 175.

<sup>193</sup> Smith, ‘*Hand This Man Over to Satan*’, 178.

any longer. This is puzzling again in terms of the purpose of a curse in Paul's mind. Apart from the problem of the role of Satan mentioned before, using 1 Cor 11 to support death as the means of salvation of the spirit of the cursed person is problematic.<sup>194</sup> Although Paul refers to death in 1 Cor 11:30-32, *curse is absent* in Paul's whole discourse on the Lord's Supper. Moreover, Smith's notion of "salvation of his spirit through physical death" makes the sin of this errant Corinthian too peculiar: why does Paul not also curse the brother who is greedy, or an idolater, reviler, drunkard or robber, in order to stop him from committing these sins any longer (5:11)? Why does Paul simply instruct the Corinthians not to "even eat with him" instead of wounding such errant brothers similarly through a curse?<sup>195</sup> Neither does Paul *curse* the Corinthians who partake in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner in order to save them (11:27-29). If 1 Cor 5:5 were really a curse, such absence of Paul's curse in other similar situations would have made 1 Cor 5:5 really exceptional. In fact, there is no other curse found in Paul's letters and even in other New Testament passages that is spoken, directly or indirectly, for the purpose of the salvation of the cursed one. As a result, it is not only true that curse is never a purpose of salvation in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman world, it is also true in the Christian world of Paul.

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<sup>194</sup> Smith, *'Hand This Man Over to Satan'*, 176.

<sup>195</sup> From his own exegesis of 5:9-11, Smith seems to be not aware of the discrepancy of his curse reading in 5:5 and his own exegesis of 5:9-11. See Smith, *'Hand This Man Over to Satan'*, 138-9.

# Chapter 3

## Satan and Identity Formation in 1 Cor 5—11:1 in the Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls & Pseudepigrapha

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In chapter 2, section 2.2.4, I have shown that the identity of the isolated insiders in 1 Cor 5-11:1 is related to Satan / demons. Satan is mentioned in the context of church discipline (5:5), sexual sin of the married (7:5) and attending idol worship meals (10:20-21). According to Paul, both instances are related to deviant behaviours that are supposed to be unacceptable to the Christian community. But how did Paul regard these deviant insiders? Why did Paul associate them with Satan?

In this chapter, I will explore the concepts of Satan with reference to the formation of group identity in Jewish literature which Paul, as a Jewish orthodox rabbi, would properly read. The literature includes the Dead Sea Scrolls (abbrev. DSS) and Pseudepigrapha respectively. The semantic meanings of “Satan” (שטן) and “Belial” (בליעל) will be explored in the DSS where the meaning of Belial is identifiable in the context, for “Satan” appears only once while Belial, another name for Satan, appears ninety-three times in the DSS.<sup>196</sup> In addition, the

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<sup>196</sup> That the terms “Satan” and “Belial” are interchangeable in the Dead Sea Scrolls is supported by Elaine Pagels, “The Social History of Satan, the ‘Intimate Enemy’: A Preliminary Sketch,” *HTR* 84.2 (1991): 105-28 [p.121, 124-125, 127]; Philip S. Alexander, “The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment* (ed. Peter W. Flint & James C. Vanderkam; 2 vols; Leiden: Brill, 1998-9), 2: 331-53. [p.341] Cf. C. Breitenbach & P.L. Day, “Satan,” *DDD*: 726-32. [p.731]

semantic meanings of Greek terms Beliar / Satan/ Devil will also be explored in the Pseudepigrapha. I will investigate

- i) if there is any relevance to the formation of the group identity with respect to Satan/Belial, and
- ii) if there is any parallel with respect to 1 Cor 5-11:1.

When exegesis concerning Belial is done in this chapter, I do not just quote the verse where “Belial” appears, but rather the whole related context of the quoted text. This is because Timothy Lim has suggested that it is insufficient just to find linguistic or formal parallels between Paul and the DSS. The meaning of terms in the context is more important:

Parallels between the Scrolls and Paul have to be examined for what they can and cannot show by first examining them within their respective contexts. What do these alleged parallels mean in the Pauline letters and sectarian literature, and in what sense are they comparable...Our illustrative examination of ‘new covenant’ shows that while there are superficial similarities between them, there are profound differences between Paul and the Damascus Document.<sup>197</sup>

This approach is laborious but necessary. In this chapter I attempt to follow the approach suggested by Timothy Lim to exegete the meaning of Belial in the DSS and Pseudepigrapha.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Timothy H. Lim, “Studying the Qumran scrolls and Paul in their historical context,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. J. R. Davila; Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003), 135–56. [p.142] This belongs to a fallacy of parallelomania that we should avoid in making literary parallels between Pauline letters and DDS or other Jewish literature as well. See Samuel Sandmel, “Parallelomania,” *JBL* 81.1 (1962): 1-13.

<sup>198</sup> I do not claim that this is an exhaustive study of the concepts of Satan in the Pseudepigrapha. Owing to the scope of my study, I just focus on terms that are equivalent to Satan and figure out their semantic meanings. There are other terms like “spirits of bastards,” “fallen angels,” “Angel of



Finally, it should be noted that the word study of “demons” in DSS and Pseudepigrapha has not been done in my study. The reasons are as follows:

1. As Philip Alexander rightly observes, there are many terms that represent different categories of demons in DSS: wicked/evil spirits, spirits of the angel of destruction, spirits of bastards, demons, Lilith, howlers and yelpers.<sup>199</sup> The usage of the Hebrew generic term demons (מַשְׁרִי) and its distinctive meaning from other categories of demons are unclear.<sup>200</sup> The demonic world of Qumran is complicated so it is difficult to do literary analysis of this specific term, in particular to identify its function related to the formation of group identity.<sup>201</sup>

2. In Pseudepigrapha, the Greek term demon (δαίμωνιον) exists mostly in books which are dated in the post-Christian era, such as *The Testament of Solomon*, *Penitence of Jannes and Jambres*, *Pseudo-Phocylides* and *Exorcism Fragment*. It is more plausible to study Christian influence of these books instead of the other way around.

However, we know that “[I]n Qumran thought a demon is a non-corporeal being which is neither human nor angelic, but which causes harm and mischief to humans in a variety of ways.”<sup>202</sup> Moreover, it shall be shown that Satan and demons belong to the same group in the spiritual realm. Both are covenant-breakers which rebel against creator God and demons are rebellious angels which became helpers of Satan (section 3.2.1.2 and section 3.3.3). This demonology of Second Temple Judaism reflected in DSS and Pseudepigrapha is sufficient for us

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Darkness” or “Mastema” that may be relevant to the theme of Satan. For the study about them in 1 Enoch and Jubilees, see Philip Alexander, “The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 337-44; Henry Ansgar Kelly, *Satan : A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 35-41.

<sup>199</sup> Philip Alexander, “The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 331, 333.

<sup>200</sup> Philip Alexander, “The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 335.

<sup>201</sup> Philip Alexander, “The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 336-7.

<sup>202</sup> Philip Alexander, “The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” 332.

to understand Paul's language of Satan and demons in 1 Corinthians. Therefore, I will focus on the word study of Satan / Belial in DSS and Pseudepigrapha.

### 3.1 Satan and the Qumran Community

There are mainly four theories to explain the origin of the Qumran community (abbrev.QC): the traditional Essene hypothesis (QC = the Essenes), the Groningen hypothesis (QC = a break-away group from the Essenes), the revised Essene hypothesis (QC = the study center of the Essenes) and the Sadducean hypothesis proposed by Schiffman (QC= pious Sadducees who insist on the Zadokite priesthood and oppose Hasmonaeen priests).<sup>203</sup> While I am mostly convinced by the reconstruction of the origin and history of the Qumran community suggested by James C. Vanderkam that the QC can be the Sadducees or the Essenes who oppose the temple system and priesthood in Jerusalem set up by the Hasmonaeen family,<sup>204</sup> it does not matter which solution is most plausible for my present study. This is because the importance of the DSS to my study is that they reveal the formation of a strong group boundary stemming from the Jewish tradition that was shared by Paul. They provide useful parallel references for the study of the work of Paul.

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<sup>203</sup> Florentino García Martínez, "The History of the Qumran Community in the Light of Recently Available Texts," in *Qumranica Minora I: Qumran Origins and Apocalypticism* (ed. Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar; STDJ 63; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 67-89. [p.68-70]

<sup>204</sup> James C. Vanderkam, "Identity and History of the Community," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years*, 487-533. [p.527-531] In other words, it is a common denominator of 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> theories. For criticisms against this reconstruction, see Philip R. Davies, "The Prehistory of the Qumran Community," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research* (ed. Devorah Dimant and Uriel Rappaport; Brill: Leiden, 1992), 116-25 [p.116-9]; for arguments supporting Groningen hypothesis, see Martínez, "The History of the Qu`mran Community," 71-89.

Based on this understanding of the Qumran community, there are numerous reasons that convince me to refer to the social function of “Satan” in the DSS in order to understand its function of identity formation in 1 Corinthians.

First of all, Paul and the Qumran community share the idea of regarding community as the temple of God. Paul explicitly articulates this metaphorical usage of “temple” in 1 Cor 3:16-17. The concept of “Temple as community” is not commonly found in various types of Diaspora Judaism in the Second Temple period when the Jews in general either regarded the Jerusalem building as “temple” and the practice of cultic rituals as a significant sign of their religious identity, or replaced both the building “temple” and the rituals by the institution of “synagogue.” The Qumran community holds to neither of these general Jewish views. Having withdrawn from the temple worship in Jerusalem and emphasizing worship ritual, they regarded their own covenant community as the virtual authentic temple. The sacrificial system in Jerusalem was deemed illegitimate because it was believed to have been manipulated by the Hasmonaeen wicked priest Jonathan.<sup>205</sup> The people in charge of the temple in Jerusalem were believed to have disobeyed the ancestral tradition of separating priests from political kings and violated the tradition that the order of high priests should be restricted to the Zadokites. Therefore, the Qumran community held that the second temple

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<sup>205</sup> Jonathan is the younger brother of Judah the Maccabee who was a high priest from 152-143 BCE. He is generally viewed by most scholars as the wicked priest mentioned in 1QpHab (I, 13; VIII, 8; XI, 4; XII, 2, 8) although not all scholars agree to it. See James C. Vanderkam, “Identity and History of the Community,” 487-533 [especially p.508-12]; Lawrence H. Schiffman, “Community Without Temple: The Qumran Community’s Withdrawal from the Jerusalem Temple,” in *Gemeinde ohne Tempel: zur Substituierung und Transformation des Jerusalemer Tempels und seines Kults im Alten Testament, antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum* (ed. Beate Ego, Armin Lange & Peter Pilhofer; WUNT 118; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1999), 267-284. For criticism against the identification of the wicked priest with Jonathan, see Philip R. Davies, “The Prehistory of the Qumran Community,” 116-9.

in Jerusalem had lost its true function as God's dwelling place. Instead, they regarded their own community as the true location of the dwelling presence of God.

This belief, community as the true temple of God, resulted in their emphasis on the boundary-defining characteristics of insiders as distinguished from outsiders, for boundary-crossing events which took place in the temple entailed defilement. Now the community is the temple and so a proper boundary must be set up to define that community and at the same time avoid defilement. As Paul seeks to establish a proper boundary for an emerging new community of God and adopts the concept of "covenant community" to the church (1 Cor 11:25; cf. 2 Cor 3:6), it is reasonable to believe that Paul, with his rigorous legal training, may be undertaking the similar project of setting up the social boundary for the emerging Christian community as it was done in the Qumran community.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Besides "God's temple as community" in 1 Cor 3:16-17, there is a tradition of scholarship which argues that a number of Pauline passages are better understood in light of the DSS: 1 Cor 11:10; 2 Cor 6:14—7:1; dualism of "sons of light" and "life in darkness" in 1 Thess 5:4-9 and Eph 5:9. Cross-referencing to DSS also helps explain why the curse in Deut 21:22-23 cited by Paul in Gal 3:13 refers to crucifixion and the meanings of "justification by grace alone" and man's sinfulness in the Letter to the Romans and Galatians. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Qumran and the Interpolated Paragraph in 2 Cor 6:14—7:1," *CBQ* 23 (1961): 271-80; Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn, "The Impact of Qumran Scrolls on the Understanding of Paul," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research*, 327-39 [p.334-5]; Fitzmyer, "Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years*, 599-621; Jörg Frey, "Die paulinische Antithese von 'Fleisch' und 'Geist' und die palästinisch-jüdische Weisheitstradition," *ZNW* 90.1-2 (1999): 45-77; Jörg Frey, "The Notion of 'Flesh' in 4QInstruction and the Background of Pauline Usage," in *Sapiential, Liturgical & Poetical Texts from Qumran: Proceedings of the Third Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Published in Memory of Maurice Baillet* (ed. Daniel K. Falk, F. García Martínez & Eileen M. Schuller; STDJ 35; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 197-226; Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn, "The Wisdom Passage in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 between Qumran and Proto-Gnosticism," in *Sapiential, Liturgical & Poetical Texts from Qumran*, 240-53. [pp.247-53]; Timothy H. Lim, "Studying the Qumran scrolls and Paul in their historical context," 135-56; Benjamin L. Gladd, *Revealing the Mysterion: The Use of Mystery in Daniel and Second Temple Judaism with its Bearing on*

Secondly, Paul and the Qumran community share the idea of identifying their own community as the true Israel—the faithful remnants called by Yahweh to be set apart for Him alone. As shown in section 2.2.1, Paul identifies the church as the ancient Israel in 1 Cor 5:7-8 and descendants of the ancient Israel in 10:1-5.<sup>207</sup> There are also a number of places in the DSS showing that this Qumran community stresses the same point. While they lived in the wilderness like isolated sectarians, they claimed themselves as the most faithful chosen people of God.

Both claims were not generally recognised by the Jews of the time. In fact, most Israelites regarded the ruling Jews in Jerusalem as those who had brought Israel independence from foreign empires, and thus as true heroes and zealots for God. In order to show that they were the genuine covenant people of God, the Qumran community was striving against the stream. This theme prevails in their mission statement in their Rule of Community as well as the *War Scroll*. In the *War Scroll*, the Qumran community states unequivocally that, in the final eschaton, they will be the only sons of light who are the army of God to fight against the army of Belial. The Hasmonaean family only brought temporary peace to the Israelites. Paul faced a similar challenge in writing 1 Corinthians: how can a new community formed mainly by Gentiles be qualified as the true Israel—the sanctified people which belong to God alone? This is particularly relevant to Pauline churches like the Corinthian church whose behaviours were deeply influenced by the pagan culture and so their lifestyle was perceived to be very deviant from the moral standards stated in the Jewish law. It is reasonable to suggest that Paul, as a former Pharisee, would react in a similar way as the Qumran community in

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*First Corinthians* (BZNW 160; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 51-84, 148-9; 181-5, 190, 195-202, 215-20 [n.94 in pp.219-20], 257-8, 270-1; David Raymond Smith, '*Hand this Man over to Satan*,' 99-102.

<sup>207</sup> Later in section 6.1.2, there will be a detailed exegesis of Christ language in 1 Cor 1 which shows the intimate relation of church and ancient Israel according to Paul.

giving instructions for a life of holiness. It is reflected in Paul's address to the recipients at the beginning of 1 Corinthians: the church as a sanctified, called to be holy people and a community which calls on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (1:2).

Third, demonology is a main theme in the DSS. Philip Alexander has rightly pointed out that "[b]elief in demons was central to their worldview, and some of the earliest known Jewish demonological texts are to be found among the Scrolls."<sup>208</sup> It is therefore reasonable to assume that the DSS are an important reference literature for us to understand the meaning of Satan/demons in 1 Corinthians.<sup>209</sup>

### 3.2 Satan in the Dead Sea Scrolls

12...When I recall your power my heart is strengthened, 13 and I rely on your kind deeds. Forgive my sin, YHWH, 14 and cleanse me from my iniquity. Bestow on me a spirit of faith and knowledge. Let me not stumble 15 in transgression. Let not **Satan שטן** rule over me, nor an evil spirit **ורוח טמאה** ; let neither pain nor evil purpose 16 take possession of my bones. Because you, YHWH, are my praise and in you I hope 17 all day... (11Q5 XIX, 12-17 = 11Q6 4-5)<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Philip Alexander, "The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls," 351.

<sup>209</sup> Some scholars endeavour to understand the excommunication act in 1 Cor 5 in the light of the Qumran texts. Yet they note critical differences between them and so it is not plausible for Paul to directly apply the excommunication act of the Qumran practice to the errant brother in 1 Cor 5:1, 5. See Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Function of 'Excommunication' in Paul," *HTR* 73.2 (1980): 251-63; Tobias Hägerland, "Rituals of (Ex-) Communication and Identity: 1 Cor 5 and 4Q266 11; 4Q270 7," in *Identity Formation in the New Testament*, 43-60.

<sup>210</sup> All the translation of DSS in this chapter is cited from Florentino García Martínez & Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (2d ed.; Leiden: Brill, 1999).

This is a psalm of plea for deliverance. God is associated with forgiveness and empowerment of life. Satan is then related to oppression and an evil / unclean spirit.<sup>211</sup> He is the one who manipulates people to do evil. Unlike the picture of Satan in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Book of Job), he is no longer a servant of God playing the role of prosecutor or destroyer. His rule is totally different from the rule of Yahweh. Under the rule of Yahweh, one receives his kind deeds, loving kindness and mercy (vv.4-8) and is bestowed with a spirit of faith and knowledge (vv.14-15). Under the rule of Satan, however, one only receives pain, evil thoughts and the evil spirit (vv.15-16).

Henry Ansgar Kelly argues that Satan here is but a common noun, like “devil” in the LXX Book of Job, because “the term used in the original is *ha-satan*, which should be translated here as ‘a satan.’”<sup>212</sup> However, the author praised the name YHWH and asked for His deliverance from death resulting from committing sin (vv.9-10, 13-15) which is based on the name of God YHWH (vv.10-11). Thus, when Satan is mentioned in v.15 and his work of bringing pain and evil purposes even takes possession of his bones, the psalmist seems to make a parallel between the name of Satan and the name of God YHWH. This suggests that *Satan seems to live and work outside the rule of God and is portrayed as a powerful agent causing people to sin and do evil.*

### **3.2.1 Belial in the Rule of the Community**

The Rule of the community (1QS) is regarded as the most important part of the sectarian texts. It is like the mission statement of the Qumran community, stating clearly why they exist and

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<sup>211</sup> Another translation of the term “evil spirit” (רוח טמאה) in 11Q5 XIX, 15 is “unclean spirit.” See

J.A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 78.

<sup>212</sup> Kelly, *Satan: A Biography*, 43-44.

for what they exist. It expresses the covenant they establish with God and their pledge of allegiance to Yahweh. They are true keepers of the covenant God established with Israel.

1QS defines who the insiders are and distinguishes them from the outsiders. Thus, 1QS can also be reviewed as containing entrance requirements for outsiders who want to become insiders and the oaths they should commit. 1QS V, 7-11 can be regarded as the summary statement of 1QS in this aspect:

These are the regulations of their behaviour concerning all these decrees when they are enrolled in the Community. Whoever enters the council of the Community 8 enters the covenant of God in the presence of all who freely volunteer. He shall swear with a binding oath to revert to the Law of Moses, according to all that he commanded, with whole 9 heart and whole soul, in compliance with all that has been revealed of it to the sons of Zadok, the priests who keep the covenant and interpret his will and to the multitude of the men of their covenant 10 who freely volunteer together for this truth and to walk according to his will. He should swear by the covenant to be segregated from all the men of injustice who walk 11 along the path of wickedness.<sup>213</sup>

This rule includes the punishment of insiders who break their vows (e.g. 1QS VI, 24-27; 1QS VII).

The key word in 1QS is “covenant”(ברית).

In this rule-setting literature, Belial is often mentioned.

### **3.2.1.1 Covenant Breakers Sharing the Destiny of Belial**

1QS I, 16-24 (cf. 4Q256 II, 1-13)

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<sup>213</sup> See also 1QS VIII, 1-19 for the establishment and job description of the Community council.



16 And all those who enter in the Rule of the Community shall establish a covenant before God in order to carry out 17 all that he commanded and in order not to stray from following him out of any fear, dread, or testing 18 (that might occur) during **the dominion of Belial**. בממשלת בליעל When they enter the covenant, the priests 19 and the levites shall bless the God of victories and all the works of his faithfulness and all 20 those who enter the covenant shall repeat after them: «Amen, Amen». 21 The priests shall recite the just deeds of God in his mighty works, 22 and they shall proclaim all his merciful favours towards Israel. And the levites shall recite 23 the iniquities of the children of Israel, all their blameworthy offences and their sins during **the dominion of 24 Belial**. בממשלת בליעל [And al] those who enter the covenant shall confess after them and they shall say: «We have acted sinfully...

Belial is mentioned twice with the same phrase “the dominion of Belial” בממשלת בליעל.

Belial is thus portrayed as the master of those who have not established a covenant with God. For all who commit to this covenant, they decide to turn away from their previous lifestyle under the lordship of Belial. Joining the community means turning away from Belial. *In the same way, breaking the covenant with God is equivalent to following the rule of Belial.*

It is shown more explicitly in the ensuing vow of blessing and cursing:

4 May he lift upon you the countenance of his favour for eternal peace. And the levites shall *curse all the men of 5 the lot of **Belial***

מקללים אח כול אנשי גורל בליעל They shall begin to speak and shall say:

«Accursed are you for all your wicked, blameworthy deeds. *May God hand you over 6*

*to terror* by the hand of all those carrying out acts of vengeance. May he bring upon you destruction by the hand of all those who accomplish 7 retributions. Accursed are you, without mercy, according to the darkness of your deeds, and sentenced 8 to the gloom of everlasting fire. May God not be merciful when you entreat him. May he not forgive by purifying your iniquities. 9 May he lift the countenance of his anger to avenge himself on you, and may there be no peace for you by the mouth of those who intercede». 10 And all those who enter the covenant shall say, after those who pronounce blessings and those who pronounce curses: «Amen, Amen».

[italics mine] (1QS II, 4-10)

*1 Cor 5:5 appears to echo the sentiment of 1QS II, 5-6 which associates betrayers with cursed people and those who are handed over to Satan.* Belial is regarded as someone who takes over the covenant breakers accursed by the Levites. The covenant breakers no longer deserve God's pardon and salvation (v.8). The covenant community should pronounce curses against them.

Similar curses against covenant breakers are found in the Damascus Document:

14 You curse those who cross them but us you have raised up». And the one who has been expelled will leave....And all 17 [those who dwell in] the camps will assemble in the third month and will curse whoever tends to the right 18 [or to the left of the] law. This is the exact interpretation of the regulations which they are to observe...(4Q266 11, 14-18)

This time it is the whole community in the camp, not the Levites, who pronounce the curse which is explicitly stated as expulsion (4Q266 11, 14).

Although not identical, this action is very similar to Paul's exhortation in 1 Cor 5:1-5. It suggests that *covenant breakers and Belial belong to the same group (vv.4-5). They deserve the same punishment from God: destruction (v.6), gloom of everlasting fire (v.8) and God's anger with no peace (v.9). Belial represents the destiny of betrayers.*

### 3.2.1.2 Belial as a Covenant Breaker

1QS X,10-11, 20-25

10 At the onset of day and night I shall enter the covenant of God, and when evening and morning depart I shall repeat his precepts; and by their existence I shall set 11 my limit without turning away. I acknowledge his judgment to be right according to my pervertedness; my sins are before my eyes, like an engraved decree....

However, my anger I shall not 20 remove from unjust men, nor shall I be appeased, until he carries out his judgment. I shall not sustain angry resentment for those who convert from iniquity, but I shall have no mercy 21 for all those who deviate from the path. I shall not comfort the oppressed until their path is perfect. I shall **not retain**

**Belial within my heart** ובליעל לוא אשמור בלבבי. From my mouth shall not be heard 22 foolishness or wicked deceptions; sophistries or lies shall not be found on my lips. The fruit of holiness will be on my tongue, profanity 23 shall not be found on it. With hymns shall I open my mouth and my tongue will continually recount both the just acts of God and the unfaithfulness of men until their iniquity is complete. 24 I shall remove from my lips worthless words, unclean things and plotting from the knowledge of my heart. With prudent counsel {I shall hide}s /I shall recount/knowledge, 25 and with discretion of knowledge I shall enclose him with a solid fence to maintain faithfulness and staunch judgment according to the justice of God.

This is a eulogy sung by members of the community to their God (1QS X, 8). V.10 states explicitly the definition of a member: entering the covenant of God and following his precepts. Before the phrase “not retain Belial within my heart” וּבִלְיַעַל לֹא אֲשַׁמֹּר בְּלִבִּי in v.21, “path” דֶּרֶכַּס is mentioned twice which is naturally referred to the commitment of the covenant or obedience of God’s precepts stated in v.10. Thus, those who go astray from the path are those who are nevertheless still members within the community.

From a larger context, this path may also refer to the “path” mentioned in the well-known doctrine of the two spirits in 1QS III,13—IV, 26. Here Belial is identified with the Angel of Darkness who is antithetical to the Prince of Light. The Angel of darkness (Belial) and the Prince of Light create two paths for the people: the path of light led by the spirit of truth and the path of darkness led by the spirit of deceit (1QS III, 20-21). From the outset, this contrast of light and darkness is similar to the dualistic religion in the Persian period. However, it is more plausible for this dualism to be inherited from the Jewish monotheistic tradition because even dark angels are created and designed by the Creator Yahweh rather than by another source of spiritual power:

However, the God of Israel and the angel of his truth assist all 25 the sons of light. He created the spirits of light and of darkness and on them established every deed, 26 [o]n their [path]s every labour <and on their paths [eve]ry [labo]ur>. God loves one of them for all. (1QS III, 24-26)

The discussion of the two spirits and then the two paths are embedded in the context of the creation story. Therefore, it is an interpretation of the creation story in Genesis rather than a

new innovation of dualism influenced by Persian religions.<sup>214</sup> In other words, the world view of the Qumran community is still grounded in the creation story in the Bible, irrespective of the Persian influence.<sup>215</sup> Persian thought might raise questions about the origin of evil forces to Diaspora Jews because beliefs in demons were popular in that culture. Some Diaspora Jews responded to questions about the origin of evil by developing the story of watchers based on Gen 6. The Qumran community might have integrated this into their dualistic view but the dualistic view was still subordinate to the grand narrative of creation in Genesis.<sup>216</sup>

Other than the origin of evil, there is a novel concept concerning Belial which is not mentioned in the Hebrew Bible: Belial as a covenant-breaker rebelling against God's design in creation. This concept is based on a deduction from the belief of the Qumran community that all things are created by God and all things work according to His design. In the time of creation, "[b]efore they existed he established their entire design... they will execute all their works according to his glorious design, without altering anything. In his hand are the laws of all things and he supports them in all their affairs" (1QS III, 15-17). The word "all" כֹּל stated in this confession of God's creation should include Belial. Thus, Belial is a created being, and its works and destiny is believed to be for God's glory.

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<sup>214</sup> Herbert G. May, "Cosmological Reference in the Qumran Doctrine of the Two Spirits and in Old Testament Imagery," *JBL* 82.1 (1963): 1-14 [pp.1-4]; Alexander, "The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls," 343-4.

<sup>215</sup> *Contra* John J. Collins who emphasises Persian dualism and Zoroastrian influence on the DSS. See John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997), 41-51.

<sup>216</sup> Philip Alexander, "The Demonology of the Dead Sea Scrolls," 351. Recent scholarship shows that even Zoroastrianism (in its earlier stages) is not as dualistic as we assume. The similarity between Zoroastrianism and Qumran can be explained by predestinarianism which is closely related to their ideas of chosen people and rigid sectarian doctrines. See Yaakov Elman, "Zoroastrianism and Qumran," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at 60: Scholarly Contributions of New York University Faculty and Alumni* (ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and Shani Tzoref; STDJ 89; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 91-8.[p.97]

However, it turns out that this created being has become the Angel of Darkness:

From the Angel of Darkness stems the corruption of all the sons of justice, and all their sins, their iniquities, their guilts and their offensive deeds are under his dominion in compliance with the mysteries of God, until his moment; and all their afflictions and their periods of grief are caused by the dominion of his enmity; and all the spirits of his lot cause the sons of light to fall. (1QS III, 21-24)

Note that the Angel of Darkness' work is described as *corruption of all the sons of justice*, and the spirits of Belial's lot is to cause *the sons of light* to fall. If Belial is not another equal power existing independently from the creator God, then a reasonable explanation is that Belial, who was originally created for the glorious design of the creator and worked under His dominion, had violated the purpose of God created for it. Moreover, it even targeted the sons of light /sons of justice through corruption and caused them to fall. It is then reasonable to interpret *Belial as a covenant breaker* who seeks to lead the covenant people to follow his step—breaking the covenant and fall. Thus, the phrase “for all those who deviate from the path” על כול סוררי דרך in 1QS X, 21 refers to the covenant-breaking way of Belial: going astray from the glorious design of the creator God and becoming corrupted.

In sum, *the vow of this community shows intolerance against covenant-breaking insiders, not outsiders who had not entered into this covenant.* In this context, “I shall not retain Belial within my heart” in 1QS X, 21 should be understood as “I shall not bear any thought of precept-breaking that violates the covenant with God that I have entered.” This is consistent with one's devotion to maintaining faithfulness to God in v.25. *Belial itself is a covenant-breaker against the creator God; it had turned away from God and those covenant-breaking insiders were regarded as followers of Belial.*

### 3.2.2 Belial in the Damascus Document

Shortly before the DSS was discovered, the Damascus Document (abbrev. CD) was found in a synagogue storeroom in Cairo and was published in 1910. CD-A and CD-B were designated and classified in this first publication. Later, other copies of Damascus Document were found: eight copies in Cave 4 (4Q266-73), one in Cave 5 (5Q12) and one in Cave 6 (6Q15). Altogether ten copies of CD were found in the Qumran caves. This compares with the Rule of Community, of which only thirteen copies were found in the caves. One copy of CD in Cave 4 was mixed with some portions of the Rule of Community.<sup>217</sup>

There are two observations from the above findings. First, they reveal the importance of the Damascus Document to the Qumran community and the intimate relation between the Damascus community and the Qumran community. The Damascus community is like a sister community of the Qumran community.

Secondly, there is close affinity between the Rule of Community and the CDs. Similar to the Rule of Community, CD emphasises the commitment of the community to the Lord although it does not contain the explicit theological belief of this sect. CD contains a number of interpretations of the Laws. Thus, CD bears another title: The Midrash on the Eschatological Torah.<sup>218</sup> The interpretations can be classified into 2 main categories: i) interpretation of the religious Laws in the Hebrew Bible and general halakhah, and ii) communal regulations. These divisions are based on the observation that the punishment against some law-breaking offenses is different from the Torah stated in the Hebrew Bible.

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<sup>217</sup> Catherine M. Murphy, *Wealth in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Qumran Community* (STDJ 40; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 26-27; Ben Zion Wacholder, *The New Damascus Document: The Midrash on the Eschatological Torah of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Reconstruction, Translation and Commentary* (STDJ 56; Leiden: Brill, 2007), xix.

<sup>218</sup> Ben Zion Wacholder, *The New Damascus Document*, xix.

For instance, according to Exod 35:2, breaking the Sabbath should result in a death sentence but this is not stated in CD-A XII, 4. On the other hand, polygamy is permitted in the Hebrew Bible but it is strictly forbidden in CD. In spite of these punishments at variance with the Pentateuch, they stress their adherence to these laws and, generally speaking, the communal regulations are more stringent.<sup>219</sup> They differentiate themselves from the Jews in terms of their pious practice of the Law.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Wacholder, *The New Damascus Document*, 13-4. For a survey of scholarship on CD until 1982, see Philip R. Davies, *The Damascus Covenant: An Interpretation of the "Damascus Document"* (JSOTSup 25; Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 1982), 1-47. For a history of the study of the language of CD from 1910 to 2000, see Steven E. Fassberg, "The Linguistic Study of the Damascus Document: A Historical Perspective," in *The Damascus Document: A Centennial of Discovery: Proceedings of the Third International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 4-8 February, 1998* (ed. Joseph m. Baumgarten, Esther G. Chazon & Avital Pinnick; STDJ 34; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 53-67. For recent study of the Sabbath law that belongs to the first category of Damascus Document, see Joseph M. Baumgarten, "The Laws of the Damascus Document—Between Bible and Mishnah," in *The Damascus Document: A Centennial of Discovery*, 17-26; Alex P. Jassen, "Law and Exegesis in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Sabbath Carrying Prohibition in Comparative Perspective," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at 60*, 115-56. For recent study about the second category, see Alexei M. Sivertsev, "Sectarians and Householders," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at 60*, 247-69. For other classifications of the instructions in CD, see Philip R. Davies, *The Damascus Covenant*, 48 (Philip's classification of admonitions and laws is strikingly similar to the above classification; see his summary in p.105); Shani Tzoref, "'Hidden' and the 'Revealed': Esotericism, Election, and Culpability in Qumran and Related Literature," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls at 60*, 299-324. [pp.310-1]

<sup>220</sup> There are noted differences between the Qumran and Damascus communities. First, the Damascus community is not as isolated from the society as the Qumran community. They still possess their own private property and family while the Qumran community seems to share all materials for public use. Secondly, while the Qumran community identifies themselves as the virtual temple, the Damascus community regards themselves as the sanctuary and tabernacle of the temple. The claim of priests is more prominent in CD than in the rule of community. See Murphy, *Wealth in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Qumran Community*, 95. The Damascus Document also instructs members to take care of their biological relatives, while the Qumran community in War 2.129 prohibited against it. This further reveals the close connection of the Damascus community with the society. See Albert I.



The Damascus community members regard themselves as the listeners of the word of God, who are the chosen remnant abiding by the new covenant of God. CD is a unified complete work because it “has a unified vocabulary, literary style, theology, eschatology and messianism.”<sup>221</sup> One unifying theme is the founding story of their community which is repeatedly mentioned. In CD-A V, 20—VI, 11a, it is the fourth time that mentions the origin of this community in Damascus. They were the princes called by God to leave the inhabitants of Judah and came to Damascus to focus on the study of the Law (VI, 5-6). They fulfilled the prophecy of Num 21:18: the princes who dig the well, where the well was interpreted as the symbol of the Law.

The Damascus community members set themselves apart for God for the purpose of exact interpretation of the Law (CD-A VI, 14) and faithful practice of the Law, including observance of festivals, the holiness codes and moral behaviours (CD-A VI, 15—VII, 4) as antidotes against the three nets of Belial: fornication, wealth and defilement of the temple (CD-A IV, 17-18). Therefore, almost two-thirds of the text are comprised of the interpretations of the Torah of this community.<sup>222</sup> They identify themselves as “those who entered the new covenant in the land of Damascus.” (CD-A VI, 19) But their new covenant is a renewed commitment, similar to the renewed commitment of the Israelites in the times of Nehemiah to follow the Torah.<sup>223</sup>

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Baumgarten, “The Perception of the Past in the Damascus Document,” in *The Damascus Document: A Centennial of Discovery*, 1-15. [pp.6-8]

<sup>221</sup> Wacholder, *The New Damascus Document*, 11. Cf. Philip R. Davies, *The Damascus Covenant*, 202.

<sup>222</sup> George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 125.

<sup>223</sup> Lim, “Studying the Qumran scrolls and Paul in their historical context,” 139-41. After his exegetical study of the “new covenant” in post-exile prophetic books in the OT, Stephen Hultgren comes to a modified conclusion: “The concept of covenant renewal...is related to, but not identical with, CD’s idea

In sum, the community of CD defines their own identity through rigorous practice of the exact interpretations of the Torah. (CD-A 4.8) Among these identity-defining texts, Belial is often mentioned.

### 3.2.2.1 Belial as a Hunter

CD-A IV, 9 – V, 2

...According to the covenant which God established with the forefathers, in order to atone 10 for their iniquities, so will God atone for them. But when the period corresponding to the number of these years is complete, 11 there will no longer be any joining with the house of Judah but rather each one standing up on 12 his watchtower. The wall is built, the boundary far away. And during all these years 13 **Belial** will be set loose against Israel, as God has said by means of the prophet Isaiah, son of 14 Amoz, saying: Isa 24:17 «Panic, pit and net against you, earth-dweller». Its explanation: 15 They are **Belial's** three nets about which Levi, son of Jacob spoke, 16 by which he catches Israel and makes them appear before them like three types of 17 justice. The first is fornication; the second, wealth; the third, 18 defilement of the temple. He who eludes one is caught in another and he who is freed from that, is caught 19 in another. The builders of the wall who go after Zaw – Zaw is the preacher 20 of whom he said: Mic 2:6 «Assuredly they will preach» - are caught twice in fornication: by taking 21 two wives in their lives, even though the principle of creation

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of a 'new covenant.'" See Stephen Hultgren, *From the Damascus Covenant to the Covenant of the Community: Literary, Historical, and Theological Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 66; Leiden: Brill, 2007), n.70 in p.115. See also Stephen Hultgren, *From the Damascus Covenant to the Covenant of the Community*, 112-5.

is Gen 1:27 «male and female he created them» 1 and the ones who went into the ark Gen 7:9 «went in two by two into the ark». And about the prince it is written: 2 Deut 17:17 «He should not multiply wives to himself»...

#### CD-A V, 9-11

But Moses said: Lev 18:13 «Do not approach your mother's sister, she is a blood relation of your mother». The law of prohibited marriages, 10 written for males, applies equally to females, and therefore to the daughter of a brother who uncovers the nakedness of the brother of 11 her father, for he is a blood relation...

These two texts are the interpretation of Isa 24:17 and Torah respectively. Here Belial is described in a retrospective way. It has worked for a long time in the history of their forefathers Israel. *It is portrayed as a hunter setting traps against their ancestor Israelites. Belial uses fornication* *הזנות*, *wealth* *ההיין*, revised to *ההון* ] *and defilement of the temple/tabernacle* *טמא המקדש* *to trap the people of God* (vv.16-18). Defilement of temple / tabernacle involves seduction to commit idolatry. Temptation of wealth refers to the unrighteous gain of money. These were sins commonly committed by the Israelites in the past.

It should be noted that the CD provides us with two pieces of information not found in the Hebrew bible. First, there is no indication in the Hebrew Bible that those sins of Israelites are related to Belial. The Qumran community attributes these faults to the hunter Belial who works behind these temptations. Secondly, they attribute the prophecy of these traps of Belial to Levi the son of Jacob (CD-A IV, 15), an attribution which is not found in the Hebrew

Bible. This may indicate their emphasis of priestly requirements over every member of the community, not just a chosen few, because Levi is designated for priesthood.<sup>224</sup>

Among the three cardinal sins, only fornication/sexual sin **הזנות** is mentioned and elaborated in detail in the ensuing context (IV, 19—V, 11. **בזנות** in IV, 20). Vices of sexual sin include: polygamy (IV, 20-21), bigamy and divorce prohibited in Deut 17:17 (V, 2),<sup>225</sup> intercourse with a woman during her menstrual flow (V, 7) and incest (V, 7-11). CD further interprets that the laws against incest committed by males in Lev 18 are also applicable to females (V, 9-11).

Three observations of interpretations of these three nets are worth noting. First, CD suggests that some sexual sins (the first net) result in the third net: the last two sexual sins entail defilement of the temple (V, 6). Why does fornication defile the sanctuary? Jonathan Klawans' notion of moral impurity best accounts for the defilement:

The two sexual sins—sexual contact with an impure woman, and incest—are listed as examples of sanctuary defilement precisely because these sexual sins can defile the sanctuary, *morally*...First, it has long been noted that Holiness Code traditions figure prominently in CD...Indeed, the passage contains within it an unmistakable allusion to Leviticus 18, a passage concerned with the morally defiling force of sexual sins...Recall that the passage opens with an exegesis of Isaiah 24.17....whose larger context is concerned with the desolation of the land that is caused by Israel's sin. Furthermore, the passage uses language reminiscent of the Holiness Code: "For the earth was

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<sup>224</sup> Wacholder, *The New Damascus Document*, 188.

<sup>225</sup> I adopt Wacholder's theory that CD-A V, 2 is a quote from the *Temple Scroll*: 11Q19 LVI, 18b-19a. Later in LVII, 17-18a, the clause "she [the wife of the king] alone will be with him all the days of her life" is added to explain Deut 17:17. This addition indicates that the Temple Scroll forbids bigamy and divorce. The author of the Damascus Community then "goes much further, ascribing to Belial the temptation of polygamy, since he holds sway over Israel." See Wacholder, *The New Damascus Document*, 190-1.

defiled **והארץ חנפה** under its inhabitants.”(24:5) Both conceptually and terminologically, Isaiah 24 is related to the idea of moral defilement.<sup>226</sup>

Previous sexual sins like polygamy and divorce are not counted as defilement of the sanctuary because they are not mentioned in the Holiness Code but are deduced from Genesis. Therefore, they do not result in the moral defilement mentioned in Lev 18:24-30.<sup>227</sup>

Secondly, CD also points out that wicked wealth (the second net) results in defilement of the temple (the third net):

...as God said: Mal 1:10 «Whoever amongst you will close my door so that you do not kindle my altar 14 in vain!». They should take care to act in accordance with the exact interpretation of the law for the age of wickedness: to keep apart 15 from the sons of the pit; to abstain from wicked wealth which defiles, either by promise or by vow, 16 and from the wealth of the temple and from stealing from the poor of his people, making widows their spoils 17 and murdering orphans... (CD-A VI, 13-17)

The “sons of the pit” **בני השחת** (VI, 15) refer to “certain economic agents who literally managed contributions of commodities to pits for storage.”<sup>228</sup> They are trapped by the third net of Belial. Here the author of CD extends the idea of wrong sacrifices mentioned in the context of Mal 1:10 to the money collected by economic agents in sinful ways: stealing, unjust oppression of the poor, etc. In other words, if you or your “Chief Financial Officer” gain

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<sup>226</sup> Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 54-55. In fact, if sexual sins stated in Lev 18 entail the defilement of the land (Lev 18:24-30), it is logical to deduce that they defile the temple because temple is included in the category of the Land.

<sup>227</sup> Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, 56.

<sup>228</sup> Murphy, *Wealth in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Qumran Community*, 39 (cf. p.76).

wealth through unrighteous means, and if you offer a portion of this wicked wealth to God in the temple, your offerings will also defile the temple, similar to the crippled or diseased animals defiling the temple mentioned in Mal 1:8-10.<sup>229</sup>

Thirdly, while both the first and second nets can lead to the third net, CD does not mention the other way around. CD never explains how defilement of the temple may lead to sexual sins or wicked wealth. This absence may indicate the emphasis on the sin of defilement of the temple over fornication and wicked wealth by the Damascus community.

In a nutshell, Belial is portrayed in a more concrete way in the CD than in the Rule of Community, showing how it led God's people astray to violate the covenant committed to God. *Here its role is a typical hunter, setting the traps of sexual immorality, unrighteous gain of money and defilement of the temple* against the people of God. Both sexual immorality and unrighteous gain of money result in defilement of the temple. Among these three, *fornication is mentioned most as the strongest seduction for leading people away from God.* These three nets are regarded by CD as three deadly sins destroying the identity of the covenant people of God, for all result in the defilement of the temple.

### 3.2.2.2 Belial as the Foreign Oppressor Pharaoh

CD-A V, 15c-21

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<sup>229</sup> Murphy bases this on the similar spelling of the Hebrew words "wealth" (לְהוֹן) and "arrogance"

(לְהִין) and argues that such wealth is wicked because it relates to "a specific kind of arrogance that associated with the abuse of wealth." (p.40) See Murphy, *Wealth in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Qumran Community*, 38-40. I disagree with her because, as I have pointed out above, CD-A VI, 13-17 explicitly defines this kind of wealth as wicked by the ways it is obtained instead of the ways it is spent.

15...For already in ancient times 16 God visited their deeds, and his wrath flared up against their actions, for it is not an intelligent people; 17 they are folk bereft of advice, in that there is no intelligence in them. For in ancient times there arose 18 Moses and Aaron, by the hand of the prince of lights and **Belial**, with his cunning, raised up Jannes and 19 his brother during the first deliverance of Israel. 20 And in the age of devastation of the land there arose those who shifted the boundary **מסיגי הגבול** and made Israel stray. 21 And the land became desolate, for they spoke of rebellion against God's precepts (given) through the hand of Moses...

Note that CD mentions three times in vv.16-17 that the ancestors of Israelites lack wisdom.

Then CD points out two names which are absent in the Hebrew Bible: Jannes and Belial.

Jannes is identified as the magician who imitated similar miracles done by Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh (Exodus 7:11) ; Belial "raised up Jannes and his brother" while Moses and Aaron were raised up by God. The brotherhood of the two magicians in vv.18-19 apparently stresses its counterpart with the brotherhood of Moses and Aaron.<sup>230</sup> In the CD version of the exodus story, *Belial, not Pharaoh, is the real master who did not let God's people go.* And at the time of the destruction of the Jewish nation Belial was responsible for leading God's people astray by enticing them to "shift the boundary" (**מסיגי הגבול**).<sup>231</sup>

This is an identity-defining text of CD because the Damascus community seems to identify their mission as Moses and Aaron's: just as they had to combat the enticement of Belial in the past, the Damascus community should face similar challenges from the same enemy Belial who spoke of rebellion against God's precepts (V, 21). Now we may understand why the author repeats twice in V, 16-17 the Israelites' lack of intelligence. This is based on

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<sup>230</sup> Wacholder, *The New Damascus Document*, 212.

<sup>231</sup> The meaning of the phrase "shifted the boundary" (**מסיגי ולהגב**) is unknown here but will become clear in the next quotation.

his evaluation of the rebellion of ancient Israelites in the past as unintelligent. Now the author evaluates the exact interpretation and absolute obedience of the Torah of the Damascus community as wise training to combat the attacks of the Belial.

In sum, Belial, like Pharaoh, is a leader who leads his army to go against God and His people in the time of CD. *Thus, Belial's followers can be regarded as outsiders, not people within the covenant community.* The mission of the Damascus Community is to combat Belial through obeying the Law. The destruction of the Jewish nation was expressed in "shifting the boundary of Israel" and it is Belial who stirred up the people to fight against the ancient Israelites.

### 3.2.2.3 Belial as an Executioner of Apostate Insiders in the End Times

CD-A VII, 21b—VIII, 3

...These escaped at the time of the first visitation 1 while the renegades were delivered up to the sword. Thus will be the judgment of all those entering his covenant but who 2 do not remain steadfast in them; they shall be visited for destruction **at the hand of Belial** ביד בליעל . This is the day 3 when God will make a visitation. The princes of Judah are those upon whom the rage will be vented...

CD-B XIX, 13-21

13 But those who remained were delivered up to the sword, which carries out the vengeance of the covenant. Thus will be the judgment of all those entering 14 his covenant, who do not remain steadfast in these precepts; they shall be visited for destruction **at the hand of Belial** ביד בליעל . 15 This is the day when God will make a visitation, as he said: Hos 5:10 «The princes of Judah will be like those who move 16



*the boundary* כמשיגי גבול , upon them he will pour out his fury like water». For they entered the covenant of conversion, 17 but have not left the path of traitors and have defiled themselves by paths of licentiousness and with wicked wealth, 18 avenging themselves, and each one bearing resentment against his brother, and each one hating his fellow. Each one became obscured 19 by blood relatives, approached for debauchery and bragged about wealth and gain {...} 20 Each one did what was right in his eyes and each one has chosen the stubbornness of his heart. They did not keep apart from the people 21 and from their sins. And they have rebelled with insolence, walking on the path of the wicked ones...[italics mine]

*CD-A VIII, 2 can be viewed as another important thematic parallel between the DSS and 1 Cor 5. "They" refer to those members in the community who have made the covenant with God but now they "do not remain steadfast in them". This is similar to the sub-group within the community that Paul describes in 1 Cor 5:11-13, chapters 8 and 10. Satan is the agent who executes the destruction. The destruction seems to connote physical destruction according to v.1: "...while the renegades were delivered up to the sword." However, the time does not refer to the present time, but the final judgment in the end time (visitation of God).*

In the exposition of CD-A VIII, 2-3 in CD-B XIX, 14-18, the phrase "shifted the boundary" (מסיגי הגבול) means unjust oppression against their neighbours and gain of wicked wealth. This is the cardinal sin for which the prophet Hosea condemns Israel in Hosea 5:10. The subject "they" refers to those who "entered the covenant of conversion, but have not left the path of traitors." (CD-B XIX, 16-17) Thus, "they" refers to apostate insiders who returned to the wicked ways of the ancestors of Israel (CD-B XIX, 21). Finally, the path of those who

“move the boundary”(כמשיגי גבול) is associated with the path of licentiousness which often includes sexual sins.

Now the relevance of the three nets of Belial to 1 Cor 5-11:1 becomes apparent. The errant Christians committing incest echoes the first net of Belial: sexual immorality. The second net, gaining wicked wealth, includes the sin of “shifting the boundary” which refers to wronging the neighbours in material exploitation. This sin is strikingly similar to Paul’s description in 1 Cor 6:8. The final net, “defilement of the temple,” is similar to the issue of eating idol food discussed in 1 Cor 8-11:1 because idolatrous behaviour is clearly serious defilement of the temple in the Jewish tradition. *This parallel, both in terms of content and order, indicates that Paul generally associated the tradition with these three nets of Belial in writing 1 Cor 5-11:1.*

CD-A XII, 2-3

## **2 ...Every /man/ over whom the spirits of Belial dominate**

בליעל, <sup>3</sup> אשר ימשלו בו רוחות בליעל, <sup>4</sup> and who preaches apostasy, will be judged according to the regulation of the necromancer or the diviner. But every one who goes astray, <sup>5</sup> defiling the sabbath and the festivals, shall not be executed, for it is the task of men <sup>6</sup> to guard him; and if he is cured of it, they shall guard him for seven years and afterwards <sup>7</sup> he may enter the assembly.

This is another example that Belial is associated with apostasy. The spirit of Belial works *in* the community to lead them astray. Vv.4-5 reveals how the community disciplined the errant members. They were not punished by death but excommunicated from the assembly for seven years with rebuke and guidance directing them back to the right path. This gives us

some hints about the concrete discipline Paul expects the church to take against the errant Christian in 1 Cor 5:5. *If the most rigorous sectarian Qumran community does not execute the death sentence or induces physical harm to those members who preach apostasy but just expels them from the assembly for seven years, it is unlikely for Paul to expect any physical harm to happen to the errant Christian when he made his command in 1 Cor 5:5.*

#### **3.2.2.4 Conclusion: Belial as a Tempter and Future Executor of Apostates**

I summarise the social meaning of Belial in CD as follows: *Belial is both a tempter (at present) and an executor of apostates (in the end time).* Belial is portrayed as an agent of execution to traitors, i.e. insiders, committing oppression against their neighbours and licentiousness at the time of God's last judgment. In the visitation of God, traitors will be destroyed at the hand of Belial. At the present moment Belial works actively as a tempter within insiders to entice them into breaking their covenant with God through the three nets. Belial induces insiders to commit apostasy.

Paul apparently shares similar language and concepts of CD against apostate insiders in 1 Cor 5:5. Paul shares the language of execution of apostate insiders in 1 Cor 5:5 with CD-A VIII, 2-3. He only modifies the time marker from "the visitation of God" in CD-A VIII, 3 to "the day of the Lord Jesus" in 1 Cor 5:5.<sup>232</sup> In addressing the issues mentioned in 1 Cor 5-11:1, *Paul shares the ideas associated with the three nets of Belial in CD-A IV, 15-19 in his teaching instead of just arbitrarily addressing the ad hoc problems of the Corinthian church and putting them together randomly.*

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<sup>232</sup> Cf. Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Function of 'Excommunication' in Paul," 256-7. However, her notion of formal parallels between what Paul advocates in the procedure of excommunication and the practice of spells in the Greek Magical Papyri (abbrev. PGM) is untenable. See Excursus 3 in Chapter 2 of this study.

### 3.2.3 Belial in the Halakhic Letter

4Q398 14-17 II, 1-8

1. ...Remember David, who was a man of the pious ones, [and] he, too, 2 [was] freed from many afflictions and was forgiven. And also we have written to you 3 some of the works of the Torah which we think are good for you and for your people, for we s[a]w 4 that you have intellect and knowledge of the Law. Reflect on all these matters and seek from him that he may support 5 your counsel and keep far from you the evil scheming{s} and **the counsel of Belial** **ועצת בליעל**, 6 so that at the end of time, you may rejoice in finding that some of our words are true. 7 And it shall be reckoned to you as justice when you do what is upright and good before him, for your good 8 and that of Israel.

This is probably the only occasion in the Halakhic Letter “Some Works of the Law” (4QMMT = 4Q394-399) where Belial is mentioned. Although the meaning of “the counsel of Belial” is not explained explicitly, it may be synonymous with “evil scheming(s)” and connotes the mind or ideas of Belial. These evil schemings can be overcome by the “intellect and knowledge of the law.” (v.4) It is then reasonable to deduce that the role of Belial here is not a tempter. *Rather Belial masks wrongs as right*, leading people astray by falsehood. Thus, studying the Torah is a key to unmasking the evil counsel from Belial. Another role of Belial is symmetrical to the first one: leading people to become suspicious of the truthfulness of the Torah. *Belial masks rights as wrong*. It is difficult to find out the truth and so we can “rejoice in finding that some of our words are true.” (v.6)

*To summarise, Belial stands in contrast with the knowledge of the Torah. It sends out false signals to lead people astray.*

### 3.2.4 Belial in the *War Scroll*

Belial is frequently mentioned in the *War Scroll* (1QM). This is because a main theme of the *War Scroll* is eschatological: the final war between the sons of light and the sons of darkness. This will likely take place in the future. Belial is the commander-in-chief, leading the whole army to fight against God and his people in Kittim.

#### 3.2.4.1 Belial as a Symbol of Gentile Political Powers

1QM I, 1- 5, 13-17 (// 4Q496 2, I, 1-11)

1. For the Ins[tructor: The Rule of] the War. The first attack by the sons of light will be launched against the lot of the sons of darkness, against **the army of Belial** בחיל בליעל, against the band of Edom and of Moab and of the sons of Ammon 2 and [...] Philistia, and against the bands of the Kittim of Ashur, who are being helped by the violators of the covenant. The sons of Levi, the sons of Judah and the sons of Benjamin, the exiled of the desert, will wage war against them. 3[...] against all their bands, when the exiled sons of light return from the desert of the nations to camp in the desert of Jerusalem. And after the war, they shall go up from there 4...[...] of the Kittim in Egypt. And in his time, he will go out with great rage to wage war against the kings of the North, and his anger wants to exterminate and cut off the horn of 5 I[srael. And th]is is a time of salvation for the nation of God and a period of rule for all the men of his lot, and of everlasting destruction for all **the lot of Belial** גורל בליעל....

In the war, the sons of light will be the strongest during three lots, in order to strike down wickedness; and in three (others), **the army of Belial** חיל בליעל will gird

themselves in order to force the lot of [light] to retreat. 14 There will be infantry battalions to melt the heart, but God's might will strengthen the he[art of the sons of light.] And in the seventh lot, **God's great hand will subdue 15 [Belial, and al]l the** angels of his dominion and all the men of [his lot.] 16 [...] the holy ones, he will appear to assist the [...] truth, for the destruction of the sons of darkness. Then 17 [...] ... great ... [...] shall stretch out the hand to [...]

One interesting remark here is that the army of Belial is composed of the traditional Gentile enemies of Israel: Edom, Moab, Ammon and Philistia (I, 1-2). Besides being coined as the army of Belial, they are called the sons of darkness (I, 7). They will join the violators of the covenant to attack the army of the sons of light (I, 2). But the destiny of this war is definite: there will be everlasting destruction of all the lot of Belial (I, 5); God's great hand will subdue Belial (I, 14-15) after sufferings of the sons of the light and its destruction is inevitable.

Although this war will take place in Kittim, a specific place in Egypt, it is cosmic because the sons of light shall shine to all the edges of the earth (I, 8). The place Kittim itself may hint at the cosmic scope of this battle. Many scholars tend to identify Kittim with the Roman Empire which leads a multinational force.<sup>233</sup> Moreover, Daniel 11:29-30 also mentions Kittim which relates to the second invasion of king Antiochus IV. This second invasion took place in 168 B.C. with a delegation of the Roman Senate sent to Egypt. Thus Kittim is identified as

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<sup>233</sup> The identification of Kittim with the Romans depends on the dating of the War Scroll. It can refer to the Romans or Seleucids (Greeks). See S. Weitzman, "Warring Against Terror: The *War Scroll* and the Mobilization of Emotion," *JSJ* 40 (2009): 213-41. [p.216, n.5] Both options support my notion that this war is in a cosmic scale.

“the Romans” in the book of Daniel.<sup>234</sup> As the Roman Empire stands for the ruler of the world, this Kittim war also connotes a cosmic scale.

*Belial is then portrayed as the leader behind those political leaders who had attacked and have been attacking Israel.* Here is the first explicit description of Belial as the enemy of God. *He works among outsiders, those Gentile leaders with power.* He stands against God and His people.

This dualistic view of Belial and God can be interpreted as Jewish theodicy: an explanation of existence of Gentile political rulers who oppress God’s people. *Belial is a symbolic figure, representing a political leader of the Gentile Empire who is not comparable with the God of Israel.*<sup>235</sup> The power of the present world rulers will disappear and God will triumph in the end. Moreover, it coincides with the message of the Book of Judges that presents political oppression as a contingent reality which will be overcome by God’s salvation for His faithful remnant.

#### 3.2.4.2 Belial as Past Enemies of Israel

1QM IV,1-2 ( // 4Q496 16 V, 1-6 )

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<sup>234</sup> Hanan Eshel, “The Kittim in the War Scroll and in the Pesharim,” in *Historical Perspectives: from the Hasmoneans to Bar Kokhba in light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. David Goodblatt, Avital Pinnick & Daniel R. Schwartz; STDJ 37; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 29-44. [p. 30] This eschatological battle in Kittim is related to the prophecy of Balaam in Num 24.24.

<sup>235</sup> This symbolic meaning is more apparent in 1QM XIV, 9, where the phrase “empire of Belial” denotes the Roman Empire. Belial is the real dominant force behind the Roman Empire.

1 And on the banner of Merari they shall write: «God's offering» and the name of the prince of Merari and the names of the commanders of his thousands. And on the banner of the tho[us]and they shall write: «God's Fury unleashed against 2 **Belial** and against all the men of his lot so that no remnant (is left)» and the name of the commander of the thousand and the names of the commanders of his hundreds.

From 1QM III onwards there is a long description about banner formation. The long name in each banner after God corresponds to the enemy of God, such as "God's mighty deeds to scatter the enemy and force all those who hate justice to flee" in 1QM III, 5-6. *Thus, Belial here corresponds to the leader of the enemy (all the men of his lot) of God.*

#### 1QM XI, 5-10

...Thus you taught 6 us from ancient times, saying: Num 24:17-19 «A star will depart from Jacob, a sceptre will be raised in Israel. It will smash the temples of Moab, it will destroy all the sons of Seth. 7 It will come down from Jacob, it will exterminate the remnant of the city, the enemy will be its possession, and Israel will perform feats». By the hand of your anointed ones, 8 seers of decrees, you taught us the ti[m]es of] the wars of your hands, to {fight} /to be glorious/ over our enemies, to fell the hordes of **Belial**, the seven 9 peoples of futility, by the hand of the poor, those you saved, [with stren]gth and success towards wonderful power, so that a melting heart became a door to hope. You shall treat them like Pharaoh, 10 like the officers of his chariots in the Red Sea...

1QM XI recalls various historic battles like the one between David and Goliath, the battles against Philistines, etc (v.1-2) in the history of Israel. The author reinterprets these battles as God's battles. They are not merely the enemies of Israel. They are in fact God's enemies,



shown by the phrase “the battle is yours” which has been repeated many times in 1QM XI. It shows that the victory of Israel in past history is solely the grace of God achieved in a supernatural way. The author seems to push the history further backwards from the times of the kingdom period to the times of Exodus when Israel was still in the wilderness. One of Balaam’s oracles is quoted. Belial is portrayed as one belonging to the peoples in Canaan. The hordes of Belial are the seven peoples of futility. This association of Belial with peoples in Canaan is never mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. The author seems to recall the various victories of God against His enemy in the past in order to establish confidence for the victory in Kittim at the end times. *Here Belial is the outsider, the leader of Canaanite peoples who sought to stop the Israelites from entering the Promised Land.*

### 3.2.4.3 Belial as an Angel of Enmity Towards God

1QM XIII.1-6, 9-12 (// 4Q495 2, 1-4 )

1 and his brothers, the [pr]iests and the levites and all the elders of the array with him. And in their positions they shall bless the God of Israel and all the deeds of his truth and they shall damn 2 there **Belial** and all the spirits of his lot. They shall begin speaking and say: «Blessed be the God of Israel for all his holy plan and for all the deeds of his truth, and blessed be 3 all who serve him in justice, who know him in faith.

4 **Accursed be Belial** בליעל וארור for his inimical plan, may he be damned for his blameworthy rule. Accursed be all the spirits of his lot for their wicked 5 plan, may they be damned for their deeds of filthy uncleanness. For they are the lot of darkness but the lot of God is for 6 [everlast]ing light...

...You, [God, have re]deemed us to be for you an eternal nation, and you have made us fall into the lot of light 10 in accordance with your truth. From of old you appointed

the Prince of light to assist us, and in [his] ha[nd] are all the angels of just[ice], and all the spirits of truth are under his dominion. You 11 made **Belial** for the pit, angel of enmity; in dark[ness] is his [dom]ain, his counsel is to bring about wickedness and guilt. All the spirits 12 of his lot are angels of destruction, they walk in the laws of darkness; towards it goes their only [de]sire.

Here Belial is depicted in sharp contrast with God. While the God of Israel should be blessed (v.1), Belial should be damned and cursed (v.2, 4). God has a holy plan while Belial's plan is inimical and wicked (v.3, 4). God made us, His people, to be an eternal nation to find the truth, light and justice under his dominion (v.9-10). But the rule of Belial is blameworthy (v.4) and in the domain of darkness (v.11), bringing wickedness and guilt. Most important of all, the spirits under Satan's rule are characterised as the angels of destruction and the people following him walk in the law of darkness and follow their own desire. (v.12) *Belial is named as the angel of enmity and his destiny is definite—destruction and the pit. His social identity here is an outsider, too.*

#### 3.2.4.4 Belial as a Definite Loser in the Final Battle

1QM XV, 1-3

1 For this will be a time of suffering for Isra[el] and a servi[ce] of war /against/ all the nations. For God's lot there will be everlasting redemption 2 and destruction for all the wicked nations. All those who are r[e]ady for the war shall go and camp opposite the king of the Kittim and opposite all **the army 3 of Belial** חֵיל בְּלִיעֵל, assembled with him for the day of ven[geance] by God's sword...

11 When [Belial] girds himself to assist the sons of darkness, and the slain of the infantry start to fall in accordance with God's mysteries, and all those appointed for battle are tested by them, 12 then the priests shall bl[ow] the trumpets of muster in order that an other relief line goes out to the battle and they shall take up position between the lines.

In 1QM XV-XVI, the focus is shifted from the present to the future war of Kittim, as described in the beginning 1QM I, 1-5, 13-17. The role of Belial in this future battle is as a commander leading the whole army against God's. His army is still called the sons of darkness (XVI, 11). However, 1QM XV, 2-3 states clearly that the king of Kittim and the army of Belial are not identical. This can be explained by the differences in time and scope of the war. At the time of the author, Belial worked behind the Roman Empire to act against God's covenant people. In the future final battle of Belial against God in Kittim, Belial will lead all wicked spirits and peoples/wicked nations on earth to fight against God's people (XV, 2; cf XV, 12-14). This suggests that the people of God will suffer even more than during their situation under the rule of the Roman Empire.

Yet the triumph of the covenant people Israel is warranted in the ensuing *War Scroll*: 1QM XVII, 6-17 and XVIII, 1-6. At the final stage of the war in Kittim, Belial will lose completely. This explains why the author coins it as "God's battle" because God does the fighting and the people of God just blow the trumpet (XVII, 10-17; XVIII, 3; cf. XVI, 3-10). It is the hand of God of Israel who attacks the whole horde of Belial. 1QM XVIII, 3 states the same acts of God as described in 1QM XI, 8: in the same manner as *God has done in the history of*

*Israel against the seven peoples in Canann (1QM XI), so God will also terminate the horde of Belial in the final battle (1QM XVIII).*<sup>236</sup>

### 3.2.5 Belial in Other DSS Texts

Belial appears in other texts in DSS. As its social identity and function have been identified elsewhere in the DSS, I present only a summary of my findings in this section without the quoted translated texts.

#### 3.2.5.1 Belial in Hodayot

Belial exists in numerous places in 1QH-A which belongs to the collection of Hodayot (thanksgiving) hymns.<sup>237</sup> These hymns are divided into two categories: teacher hymns and community hymns. Hymns of the teacher depict his personal encounters and expresses genuine feelings or thought to YHWH. The emphasis is placed on the I-Thou relation of the author and YHWH.<sup>238</sup> It usually begins with “I thank you, Lord” (אודכה אדוני; e.g. 1QH-A X, 31-37; XII, 5—XIII, 4). Another category is community hymns which are more concerned with the sectarian’s place in the community. There is no mention of the teacher and his experience of persecution. The focus is on praises to God for his salvation graciously bestowed upon the author through the community. Entering the community is like passing

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<sup>236</sup> This scene of blowing the trumpet in the final victory is similar to what Paul depicts for the second coming of Christ in 1 Thess 4:16, but we are not sure who will blow the trumpet in 1 Thess 4:16.

<sup>237</sup> Besides 1QH-A, there is another manuscript in cave 1 (1QH-B) and six manuscripts in cave 4 (4Q427-432) which are classified as the Hodayot manuscripts. 1QH-A is the earliest and main manuscript of the Hodayot collection acquired by Eleazar Sukenik. See Julie A. Hughes, *Scriptural Allusions and Exegesis in the Hodayot* (STDJ 59; Leiden, Brill, 2006), 2, 9.

<sup>238</sup> Philip R. Davies, *Behind the Essenes: History and Ideology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (BJS 94; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 88.

from death to life. There is no salvation outside the community (cf. 1QH-A XI, 19-23; XIX, 3-14).<sup>239</sup>

“An assembly of Belial” (ועדת בליעל) appears in 1QH-A X, 22 which seems to echo “assembly of the wicked” in 1QH-A X, 12. From the pronoun “they” we know that the wicked refer to a group of people, a council of futility. *Belial here functions as a symbol representing a group of wicked people. We do not know if they are in reference to insiders or outsiders.*

In 1QH-A XI, 28-29, 32, “torrents of Belial” (נחלי בליעל) in vv.29, 32) or Belial is mentioned. This is a poetic description of the final judgment of God on the world and Belial. Similar to the *War Scroll*, Belial here is depicted as the enemy of God subject to His judgment. But it suggests that God’s judgment will take place at Belial’s own base in Abaddon. Belial is defeated not only in the battle of Kittim or other places, but also at its own base. *Belial, as an outsider, will encounter not only a fatal defeat but also unparalleled total destruction (v.36).*

On the other hand, 1QH-A XII.12-16 portrays Belial as the representative of unfaithful covenant people, those who have a “double heart” (בלב ולב) and “are not firmly based in your truth.” In other words, Belial is related to *insiders* as accomplices who are not faithful to their pledge to the Lord.

In 1QH-A XIV, 21-24 and 1QH-A XV, 2-3, Belial is represented by the pronoun “they” again as in 1QH-A X, 22. However, the identity of “they” is clear. They may be referred to those who have “staggered off the path of your heart”(XIV, 21) , like sailors on a ship in the raging sea. They were insiders, the covenant people, who have decided to follow the path that “the uncircumcised, the unclean, the vicious, do not travel.” (XIV, 20-21) They are double-minded

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<sup>239</sup> George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 133-37.

insiders. Belial counsels them to walk away from the path of God. *Belial is portrayed as a counsellor who tempts the insiders to break their covenant and walk away from God. Belial is their initial motivator for breaking the covenant.*

#### **3.2.5.2 Belial in Psalms Scrolls 4Q88 and Peshier Psalm 4Q171**

Belial is found in the context of 4Q88 X, 3-11 and 4Q171 II, 9-12. 4Q88 and Psalm peshier (4Q171) prophesy the prosperity of the people of God after God puts Belial into total destruction. It is the Qumran community's version of the vision of "New Heaven and earth" in the eschaton. Before this age comes, the poor may face a period of distress and snares of Belial. In the end, however, there is no longer Belial (4Q88 X, 10). They can enjoy all the blessings from the land. *Belial can be viewed as an obstacle to the poor to receive peace and material blessings from the land that God intends to give them. Belial can be understood as an oppressor.*

#### **3.2.5.3 Belial in 4Q174, 175, 177**

4Q174, 175, 177 are interpretations of the Hebrew Bible. 4Q174 interprets Nathan's oracle and Amos' oracle; 4Q175: Joshua's curse in Josh 6:26; 4Q177: Ps 6.

4Q174 (4QFlor) combines Nathan's oracles and Amos' oracles and interprets them as two Davidic Messiahs. One is a kingly Messiah. The other, from the interpretation of the prophecy of Amos, is the priestly Messiah who is the interpreter of Law and will rise up in Zion to restore the worship of YHWH (4Q174 1 I, 21, 2, 11-12). Thus the Qumran community hopes for the coming of Messiahs, not the Messiah. This theory of two messiahs emphasises both the kingly Messiah (descended from David) and the priestly Messiah (descended from the order of Zerubbabel) to rule over the restored Israel together. "Community as a temple not

made with human hands” stands out as a prominent theme in 4Q174 articulated from the eschatological perspective.<sup>240</sup>

Belial appears in the context 4Q174 1 I, 21, 2, 7-13; 4Q175, 21-30; 4Q177 IV, 8-16. The sons of Belial are regarded as the enemies of David (4Q174 1 I, 21, 2, 8) or the accursed ones (4Q175 23). According to 4Q174 1, I, 21, 2, 7-13 or 4Q177 IV, 8-16, the sons of Belial or the power of Belial stand antithetical to the Israelites who are the sons of light. Finally God will rescue them from the spirits of Belial.

At the outset of these two accounts, the sons of Belial seem to be outsiders of Israel. However, George J. Brooke has rightly rebuked this impression by looking into the relation of vv.7-9 in 4Q174 with its preceding context:

The structure reveals that the important aspect of the defeat of the children of Belial is *the cessation of their present activity in the community of the children of light*...Lines 1-7 have shown how the sanctuary is to be pure from the outset and to be maintained as such, yet there is always the possibility until the latter days cease, because the sanctuary is of men, that it can be made desolate, impure, *from within*, through the activity of Belial. As lines 1-7 are in the language of the eschatological sanctuary, so

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<sup>240</sup> This theme “Community as temple not made with human hands” can be indirectly derived from the deliberate omission of the phrase “for my name” in the quotation of 2 Sam 7 in 4Q174 1 I, 21, 2, 10 and the interpretation of “his Messiah” in Ps 2:2 as plural “the elect ones of Israel” (בְּחִירֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) in 4Q174 1 I, 21, 2, 19. See George J. Brooke, “Miqdash Adam, Eden and the Qumran Community,” in *Gemeinde ohne Tempel*, 285-301. [p.287]

7-9 are in the language of the eschatological battle, but the referent in both cases is *the community*.<sup>241</sup> [italics mine]

Only those inside the sanctuary are able to pollute the sanctuary, where the sanctuary is the community itself. Thus, the activity of Belial aiming at defiling the community can only work from within. It is then reasonable to deduce that the sons of Belial are *insiders* instead of outsiders.

This is further supported by 4Q175. The accursed man in 4Q175, 23 is mentioned immediately after Josh 6:26 which is a curse against the Israelites rebuilding the city of Jericho in the future.<sup>242</sup> The ensuing sins that they commit (e.g. great blasphemy among the sons of Jacob in 4Q175, 28-29) further confirm that these sons of Belial or accursed ones are Israelites. *Thus, once again, the sons of Belial in 4Q175 can be identified as covenant-breakers.*

#### **3.2.5.4 Belial in 11QMelchizedek**

11Q13 is also called 11QMelchizedek, for Melchizedek is the main figure of eschatological savior to the righteous ones in this work. This work was copied between 75-50 BCE and is regarded without dispute as a pre-Christian document.<sup>243</sup> Similar to the *War Scroll*, 11QMelchizedek is usually classified as an eschatological work of the Qumran community.

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<sup>241</sup> George J. Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran: 4QFlorilegium in its Jewish Context* (JSOTSup 29; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 195-6.

<sup>242</sup> With reference to 1 Kgs 16:34, it is likely that this curse against rebuilding Jericho is understood as a curse against the rebellious Israelites.

<sup>243</sup> John Sietze Bergsma, *The Jubilee from Leviticus to Qumran: A History of Interpretation* (VTSup 115; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 278.



The social identity of Belial is unclear in 11Q13 II, 11-25. On the one hand, the phrase “the spirits of his lot” (רוחי גורלו) in v.12 is found in 1QM XIII, 12 and identified as “angels of destruction,” as Fitzmyer suggests.<sup>244</sup> According to the *War Scroll* cited above, the “angels of destruction” are regarded as outsiders attacking God’s people. On the other hand, this phrase is also found in the Rule of community 1QS III, 24. In that context, as shown above, Belial is an insider who breaks the covenant.

In conclusion, it is unclear if Belial can be identified here as an insider or outsider of the covenant people of God in 11Q13. Yet it is rather apparent that Belial is the enemy of God and Melchizedek.

### 3.3 Satan in the Pseudepigrapha

Satan has many titles in the Pseudepigrapha.<sup>245</sup> Besides Satan, the most common titles are Beliar and Devil.<sup>246</sup> These terms are most frequent in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (*T. 12 Patr.*) and *Testament of Job* (*T. Job*). The research on the meaning of Beliar (Βελίαρ) /Satan (σατάν) /Devil (διάβολος) will begin in these two books followed by other Pseudepigrapha.

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<sup>244</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Further Light on Melchizedek from Qumran Cave 11,” *JBL* 86.1 (1967): 25-42. [p.38]

<sup>245</sup> The Greek text of the Pseudepigrapha is based on the Greek version prepared by Craig E. Evans in BibleWorks 8. The English translation is cited from *OTP*.

<sup>246</sup> The Greek term “Beliar”(Βελίαρ) is equivalent to Hebrew “Belial”(בליעל) in the DSS. See H. C. Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A New Translation and Introduction,” in *OTP* 1: 775-828. [n.4c in p.783]

### 3.3.1 Satan in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*

There are well-known controversies about the provenance of this book. For example, R. H. Charles advocates a Jewish provenance with Christian interpolations and so *T. 12 Patr.* can be used for studying the context of the NT. However, M. de Jonge comes to a diametrically opposite conclusion, claiming that *T. 12 Patr.* was originally a Christian work and later incorporated with Jewish materials. This work informs us about “the social and religious life of the early Christian church” compared with Second Temple Judaism.<sup>247</sup>

However, there have been additional discoveries of Aramaic fragments of *T. Levi*, Hebrew fragments of *T. Naph.* and possibly other Testaments. Besides this external evidence, some internal evidence provides substantial support for its Jewish provenance:

- i) *T. 12 Patr.* repeatedly stresses the obedience to God’s Law that differentiates Israel from the Gentiles, and the emphasis on the identity of twelve tribes of Israel (e.g. *T. Sim.* 6:5; *T. Levi* 5:6; *T. Jud.* 22:1-2; 26:1; *T. Dan* 7:3; *T. Naph.* 3:2-4; 5:8; *T. Jos.* 2:2);
- ii) the outstanding leadership of Levi and Judah to the tribes of Israel: Levi and his descendants stand for the order of priesthood and teachers of the Law, whereas Judah stands for a tribe from which a King will arise to rule over the nations and the Lord’s salvation will be upon Israel through these tribes (e.g. *T. Reu.* 6:7-11; *T. Sim.* 5:5-6; 7:2; *T. Jud.* 25:1; *T. Iss.* 5:7; *T. Dan* 5:10-11; *T. Naph.* 5:1-5; 8:1-3; *T. Gad* 8:1). This reflects a prominent theme in the

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<sup>247</sup> For a clear summary of this debate, see H. F. D. Sparks, “The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” in *AOT*, 505-15. Cf. H. C. Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” 775-81. About the arguments for a close relation between *T. 12 Patr.* and Dead Sea Scrolls and its implication to the Jewish provenance of *T. 12 Patr.*, see Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. -A.D. 135)*, Vol. 3.2 (rev. and ed. by Geza Vermes, Martin Goodman and Fergus Millar; Edinburgh : T&T Clark, 1987), 767-81.

Dead Sea Scrolls that the true people of God await the salvation of a kingly and priestly Messiah;<sup>248</sup>

iii) the justification of violence for taking revenge (e.g. *T. Levi* 5:3-4; 6:3—7:4).

Therefore, I agree with Schürer, Vermes, Goodman and Millar that “[T]he Testaments are, therefore, best defined as a Jewish work, related to, but not necessarily deriving from, Qumran, which has survived in a Christian version incorporating a limited amount of easily recognizable editorial modifications and glosses.”<sup>249</sup> In other words, *T. 12 Patr.* is basically a Jewish work prior to the first century.<sup>250</sup>

The meanings of Beliar, Satan and Devil in *T. 12 Patr.* are now examined as below .

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<sup>248</sup> Cf. H. C. Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” n.8a in p.816.

<sup>249</sup> Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People*, vol. 3.2, 772.

<sup>250</sup> H. C. Kee, “Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,” 777-8. Recently, James Davila has applied new criteria to redefine the provenance of Pseudepigrapha. As a result, he dismisses the Jewish origin of *T. 12 Patr.* and raises doubts about the Jewish origin of *T. Job*. See James R. Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other?* (JSJS 105; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 232-5. However, his agreement with M. Jonge’s dismissal of the Jewish provenance of *T. 12 Patr.* is expressed only in assertion without arguments. On the other hand, *T. 12 Patr.* seems to fulfil his own proposed criteria II (*T. Levi*), IV and V for Jewish authorship. See Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha*, 64-68. According to Davila’s new criteria, only nine pseudepigrapha are qualified to be of Jewish origin. See Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha*, 120-79.

**Beliar** Βελίαρ

**Satan** σατάν

**Devil** διάβολος<sup>251</sup>

*T. Reu.* 2:2; 4:7, 11; 6:3

*T. Sim.* 5:3

*T. Levi* 3:3; 18:12; 19:1

*T. Jud.* 25:3

*T. Iss.* 6:1; 7:7

*T. Zeb.* 9:8

*T. Dan* 1:7; 4:7; 5:1, 10-11

*T. Dan* 3:6 ; 5:6; 6:1

*T. Naph.* 2:6

*T. Gad* 4:7

*T. Naph.* 3:1; 8:4, 6

*T. Ash.* 1:8; 3:2

*T. Ash.* 6:4

*T. Ash.* 1:9; 3:2

*T. Jos.* 7:4; 20:2

*T. Benj.* 3:3-4, 8; 6:1,7; 7:1-2

### 3.3.1.1 Satan as the Destination, Tempter and the Evil Path of God's People

First, Beliar/ Satan/ Devil is depicted as the destination to which God's people are heading when they commit sexual immorality (πορνεία). In *T. Reu.* 6:3, the noun "impious act" (ἀσέβημα) appears only once in Lev 18:17 in the whole LXX and also once in the whole Greek

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<sup>251</sup> H. C. Kee says that "The devil (*diabolos*) is somewhat more common than Satan in T12P." See H. C. Kee, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," n.2a in p.782. From this survey, he is not correct. Satan is a bit more common than devil in *T. 12 Patr.*

Pseudepigrapha. This indicates that the author may be highlighting the sexual immorality committed by Reuben as the grave sin listed in Lev 18, the incestuous union with his stepmother.<sup>252</sup>

The author of *T. Reu.* then regards Reuben's confession as a foundation narrative and develops his moral teaching against sexual immorality from that narrative. In 2:2 Beliar is portrayed as the commander of seven spirits of rebellion, leader of rebellion of the whole humanity. When a person commits sexual sin, the next destination is Beliar (*T. Reu.* 4:7, 11; *T. Sim* 5:3) and once he arrives, Beliar will cause him to stumble further. Beliar is the destination of anyone who goes astray from the Lord.

It should be noted that Beliar does not play the role of tempter of sexual immorality in *T. 12 Patr.* In all three sexual temptation narratives: Reuben's incestuous sin with his father's wife Bilhah (*T. Reu.* 3:11-15), Judah's incestuous sin with Tamar (*T. Jud.* 12) and the repeated sexual temptations of the beautiful Egyptian woman (*T. Jos.* 9:5) to Joseph (*T. Jos.* 3:1—9:5),<sup>253</sup> Beliar/Satan/Devil is almost absent. He is mentioned only once in *T. Jos.* 7:4, where Beliar encouraged the Egyptian woman to kill herself.<sup>254</sup> Throughout the process of the woman's sexual harassment of Joseph, she was driven by her own evil desire (τῆς ἐπιθυμίας αὐτῆς τῆς πονηρᾶς) in *T. Jos.* 3:10. In his moral lessons to children, Reuben attributes the root of his own lustful view of married woman to being drunk and arrogant. In all cases it is not related to temptation by Beliar.

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<sup>252</sup> See also H. W. Hollander and M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs : A Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 104.

<sup>253</sup> The Egyptian woman has used over seven different strategies to seduce and threaten the young man Joseph to have sexual intercourse with her. See also *T. Jos.* 2:7.

<sup>254</sup> Even in *T. Reu.* 6:3, Beliar is not the tempter of sexual sin but the accuser against those who have committed it.

Secondly, Beliar/ Satan/ Devil is depicted as a tempter. It is related to acts which lure God's people to walk away from God:

Observe the Lord's commandments, then, my children, and keep his Law. Avoid wrath, and hate lying, in order that the Lord may dwell among you, and **Beliar** may flee from you.... For I read in the Book of Enoch the Righteous that *your prince is **Satan*** and that all the spirits of sexual promiscuity and of arrogance devote attention to the sons of Levi in the attempt to observe them closely and *cause them to commit sin before the Lord* [italics mine] (T. Dan 5:1, 6)

Like the depiction of Belial in the DSS as one who lures insiders to break the covenant (e.g. section 3.3.1 & 3.3.2), Satan in T. Dan is depicted as the one who causes the sons of Levi to sin before the Lord, especially tempting their descendants to commit sexual immorality and become proud. He also tempts Dan to commit murder by arousing a spirit of jealousy and anger (T. Dan 1:7-8).

This depiction of a tempter does not contradict the first depiction of Satan in T. Reu. and T. Jos., for they are not mutually exclusive: Beliar is BOTH the destination AND the motivating force for God's people in committing sexual immorality.

For people of God who fall into the temptation of Beliar, they become captives of Beliar and disobedient ones against God :

And there shall arise for you from the tribe of Judah and (the tribe of) Levi the Lord's salvation. He will make war against **Beliar**; he will grant the vengeance of victory as our goal. 11 And he shall take from **Beliar** the captives, the souls of the saints; and he shall turn the hearts of the disobedient ones to the Lord, and grant eternal peace to those who call upon him. (T. Dan 5:10-11)

“The disobedient ones” do not necessarily imply that all their works are sinful, for those who do both good and evil are also regarded as disobedient in *T. 12 Patr.* These insiders are labelled as those who have two faces, having lost integrity and are pleasing to Beliar. For those who belong to God, they overcome the temptations from Beliar and cling to goodness *only* (*T. Ash.* 3:1-2; *T. Benj.* 6:1-7).

Thirdly, Beliar/ Satan/ Devil is depicted as an alternative path for God’s people who walk away from the way of God: either to obey God or to be ruled by Beliar. One either lives according to the Law of God or the Law of Beliar (*T. Levi* 19:1; *T. Naph.* 2:6). The following moral discourse best represents these diverse paths, probably inherited from the tradition of blessing and cursing in Deuteronomy:

If you achieve the good, my children, men and angels will bless you; and God will be glorified through you among the gentiles. The **devil** will flee from you; wild animals will be afraid of you, and the angels will stand by you....The one who does not do the good, men and angels will curse, and God will be dishonoured among the gentiles because of him; the **devil** will inhabit him as his own instrument. Every wild animal will dominate him, and the Lord will hate him. (*T. Naph.* 8:4, 6)

Fourthly, Beliar/ Satan/ Devil works in the mind of those insiders who know the Law and the will of God, and through the process of doing good or following the Law, one casts out the Devil (*T. Iss.* 7:7; *T. Dan* 5:1; *T. Benj.* 3:3; *T. Naph.* 3:1; *T. Ash.* 3:2). On the other hand, when one does not observe the Law, one is not free but is ruled and mastered by Satan (*T. Iss.* 6:1; *T. Dan* 4:7; *T. Ash.* 1:8). In the end, one either sees the face of God or the face of Beliar, either rejoices with the Lord and is clothed with righteousness or is bound with Beliar (*T. Levi* 18:12; *T. Ash.* 6:4).

*Combining these four pictures together, Beliar/Satan/ Devil is the tempter, the path and the destination of God's people when they sin.* It motivates God's people to commit sin and works in their mind when they do not observe the Law of God. Even though a patriarch was not tempted by Satan but committed sexual sin by himself, his destination would be the place of Satan.

### **3.3.1.2 Satan Deceives All People Including Outsiders**

Besides the works among God's people, Beliar/ Satan/ Devil also tempts outsiders to sin against God. It triggers anger in people's hearts to the extent of overruling the reason and deceives people about the real consequences they will face when committing lawless acts and practising injustice (*T. Dan* 3:1-6; 4:1-7). While the spirit of love brings life and hope to people, Beliar works with the spirit of hatred and brings death to mankind (*T. Gad* 4:6-7). It works with errors in people's minds so they regard themselves as doing right though they are actually committing sin (*T. Levi* 3:3; *T. Jud.* 25:3; *T. Zeb.* 9:8; *T. Dan.* 3:6; *T. Benj.* 6:1). Beliar sends false signals to enchant humankind.<sup>255</sup>

### **3.3.1.3 Relevance to 1 Cor 5-7**

Previous scholarship has observed the relevance of *T. 12 Patr.* to 1 Cor 5-7. For instance, Brian Rosner argues that 1 Cor 6:18-20 refers to the story of Joseph fleeing from Potiphar's wife both in Gen 39 and *T. 12 Patr.* The command "flee from sexual immorality" echoes *T. Reu.* 5:5; the phrase "your body is temple" in 1 Cor 6:19 corresponds to Joseph's moral instructions to his children for prayer and fasting in *T. Jos.* 10:1-3, and "glorify God in your

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<sup>255</sup> This seems to be an extension of the works of Belial portrayed in the Halakhic Letters of DDS (see section 3.2.3) from confusion of God's people to humankind in general.



body” in 1 Cor 6:20 echoes Joseph’s own testimony of overcoming the sexual seduction as an act of glorifying God in *T. Jos.* 8:5.<sup>256</sup>

The moral excellence of Joseph in the Jewish tradition would have relevance to a Pharisee like Paul in giving moral teachings against sexual temptation and visiting prostitutes. Therefore, *T.12 Patr.* may be considered relevant to 1 Cor 6:12-20. However, there is no direct relevance of Joseph’s story to the case of incestuous union in 1 Cor 5, which is not about lacking self-control, getting drunk or being sexually seduced by a charming woman, but about a long-term romantic relationship of a son with his stepmother. Moreover, it is unconvincing that “the sexually immoral person sins against his own body” in 1 Cor 6:18b can be derived from *T. 12 Patr.*<sup>257</sup> *T.12 Patr.* does not state that the sin of sexual immorality is more serious than the other vices. *T. Naph.* warns against departing and dishonouring God’s design in the created order (3:1-5; 4:1); whereas *T. Gad* warns against a spirit of hatred and envy (3:1-3); *T. Ash.* two-faced hypocrites (6:1-2) and *T. Sim.* suggests that a spirit of envy and anger can cause turmoil in one’s body (4:8), not just sexual immorality which sins against one’s body. Each testament in *T. 12 Patr.* highlights different vices and urges the readers to avoid committing them; sexual immorality is just one of the vices, *not* the most devastating one.

Will Deming points out the parallel between 1 Cor 7:5 and *T. Naph.* 8:7-10, in particular the verbal similarities between *T. Naph.* 8:8 and 1 Cor 7:5: “for there is a time for a man to embrace his wife, and a time to abstain from that for prayer”. He then quotes from previous scholarship to argue that there is Stoic influence in the *Testaments*, so he endeavours to draw

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<sup>256</sup> Rosner, *Paul, Scripture, & Ethics*, 137-43.

<sup>257</sup> Rosner, *Paul, Scripture, & Ethics*, 143-5.

parallels between Stoic thoughts on marriage and Paul's teachings in 1 Cor 7.<sup>258</sup> However, it is questionable to conclude that there is a common theme between *T. Naph.* 8:8 and 1 Cor 7:5, although the wording is similar. The context of *T. Naph.* is about doing good works by obedience to the Law of God. *T. Naph.* 8 implies that it is a higher priority for a man to pray rather than have intercourse with his wife. 1 Cor 7:5, however, proposes a reverse ranking: having sexual intercourse with one's spouse and resisting temptation from Satan should be considered a higher priority rather than devoting oneself to prayer. In the latter case, Paul adds a condition that one should get consent from the spouse first, and this emphatic remark is absent in *T. Naph.* 8.

I propose the following as the relevance of *T. 12 Patr.* for 1 Cor 5—7. First, Reuben has committed sexual immorality which is similar to the errant brother in 1 Cor 5:1: having sex with his father's wife Bilhah (*T. Reu.* 3:11-15).<sup>259</sup> The formula "Sexual Immorality→Beliar" (Beliar is the destination of God's people who commit sexual sin listed in Lev 18) may explain the phrase "hand over this man to Satan" in 1 Cor 5:5a: *take this man to the place where he is supposed to head to when he commits sexual immorality listed in Lev 18.*

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<sup>258</sup> Will Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 120-3. See n.71 in pp.123-4 for his comprehensive survey of previous scholarship which argues for the influence of Stoic thoughts on *T. 12 Patr.*, and Deming's arguments. For evidence from OT as well as Tannaitic halakha which shows that abstinence in preparation for cultic activities is common in ancient Jewish tradition, see Rosner, *Paul, Scripture, & Ethics*, 160-1.

<sup>259</sup> It is undeniable that there are at least three remarkable differences between Reuben and the errant Christian in 1 Cor 5:1: i) Reuben committed this incestuous sexual sin when his father Jacob was still alive (3:15), while the errant brother's father has probably been deceased ; ii) Reuben's sin was probably a one-shot sexual intercourse instead of a long-term erotic relation; iii) Reuben confessed and regretted having sex with Bilhah (4:3-5) while the errant Christian expresses no sign of confession. Taking into consideration these differences, we can still find relevance from *T.12 Patr.* in the light of the depiction of Beliar.

Secondly, Beliar mainly works in the people of God and seduces them to acts of betrayal. The patriarch betrayed his faith in God and at the same time he betrayed his own brothers. *This theme of betrayal pervades the narratives in T. 12 Patr.* In the story of the incestuous union of Reuben and Beliah, he betrayed his father; when Judah had sex with his daughter-in-law, he brought shame on his family (*T. Jud. 14*). For the other patriarchs, confessions of their failures against the temptations of Satan, such as Simeon (*T. Sim. 5:1-2*), Dan (*T. Dan 1:6-8*) and Gad (*T. Gad 3*), are all related to their betrayal of their brother Joseph. This coincides with the theme of betrayal in 1QS I, 16-24 (see section 3.2.1.1). As “fear the Lord” and “being obedient to the Law of God” are often juxtaposed with “love your neighbour” throughout *T. 12 Patr.*, their confession of betraying Joseph is naturally understood as being unfaithful to God. This equivalent sense of fear of God being equal to loving your neighbours is best summarised at the end of *T. 12 Patr.*:

Fear the Lord and love your neighbor. Even if the spirits of **Beliar** seek to derange you with all sorts of wicked oppression, they will not dominate you, any more than they dominated Joseph, my brother. 4 How many men wanted to destroy him, and God looked out for him! For the person who fears God and loves his neighbor cannot be plagued by the spirit of **Beliar** since *he is sheltered by the fear of God*. 5 Neither man's schemes nor those of animals can prevail over him, for *he is aided in living by this: by the love which he has toward his neighbor*. [italics mine] (*T. Benj. 3:3-5*)

Reading 1 Cor 5 in the light of this, the errant Christian may be regarded by Paul as an insider of the church but betrays both God and the faith community. In the light of DSS, he is regarded as a covenant-breaker by associating with Satan; in the light of *T. 12 Patr.*, he is regarded as a betrayer who lacks the fear of God. Thus, this errant Christian, together with those named brothers who continue to commit vice in 1 Cor 5:10-11, should be treated

neither as outsiders (clarified in 1 Cor 5:9) nor normal insiders (Paul urges them to be united and no divisions in 1 Cor 1:10). Paul urges the church to keep social contact with both outsiders and normal insiders, but to these apostate insiders, he urges the church to “not even eat with them” which implies social ostracism. This concept of the apostate finds parallels with Satan in both the DSS and *T. 12 Patr.* In both contexts, Satan stands for the group of God’s people rebelling against God. *As God’s people should hold no association with Satan, Paul in 1 Cor 5 urges the church not to keep contact with apostate insiders.*

Besides those about Satan, there are also parallels on the teachings against sexual immorality between *T. 12 Patr.* and 1 Cor 5—7. First, there is a parallel between the logic of Paul in 1 Cor 7:2, 9 and *T.12 Patr.* Unlike the emphasis on procreation in marriage, both Paul and the author of *T. 12 Patr.* highlight another purpose of marriage:

Do not devote your attention to the beauty of women , my children, nor occupy your minds with their activities. But live in integrity of heart in the fear of the Lord, and weary yourself in good deeds, in learning, and in tending your flocks, *until the Lord gives you the mate whom he wills, so that you do not suffer, as I did.* [italics mine] (T. Reu. 4:1)

9 Be on guard against the spirit of promiscuity (τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς πορνείας), for it is constantly active and through your descendants it is about to defile the sanctuary. 10 Therefore take for yourself a wife (γυνᾱίκα) while you are still young, a wife who is free of blame or profanation, who is not from the race of alien nations. (*T. Levi 9:9-10* )

Therefore, it is not strange or self-contradictory for Paul to condemn sexual immorality while upholding the regular practice of mutual sexual gratification for married couples in 1 Cor 7:1-7. It is also not novel for a Jew like Paul to advocate marriage as an antidote to sexual immorality

in 1 Cor 7:2, 9. There is other Jewish literature like *T.12 Patr.* which makes a similar suggestion that getting married is one effective way to overcome sexual immorality if a person lacks self-control.

Secondly, there is a parallel between 1 Cor 7:37 and *T.12 Patr.*:

But you, my children, run from evil, corruption, and hatred of brothers; cling to (προσκολλάω) goodness and love. *For the person with a mind that is pure with love does not look on a woman for the purpose of having sexual relations (πορνείαν).* He has no pollution in his *heart (καρδία)*, because upon him is resting the spirit of God. For just as the sun is unpolluted, though it touches dung and slime, but dries up both and drives off the bad odor, so also the pure mind, though involved with the corruptions of earth, edifies instead and is not itself corrupted. [italics mine] (*T. Benj.* 8:1-3)

Besides getting a wife, the author of *T.12 Patr.* proposes another antidote to sexual temptation: if a person's *mind* is pure and he has no defilement in his *heart (καρδία)*, he will not be sexually tempted by the beautiful appearance of women, which implies that he will not fall into sexual sin even though he is not married. This provides a conceptual parallel to 1 Cor 7:37 where Paul endorses a person as doing the right thing when he stands firm in his heart (*καρδία*) without the necessity [to get married], and is strong willed (which refers to a faculty of one's mind) in making the decision not to marry his fiancée (ἐξουσίαν δὲ ἔχει περὶ τοῦ ἰδίου θελήματος). *T. Benj.* 8:1-3 represents a Jewish tradition which believes that an undefiled pure heart entails the power of immunity from committing sexual sin. This can be a rational ground for Paul to endorse him "doing a right thing" for not getting married in 1 Cor 7:37.

Paul's rationale and the terms used in 1 Cor 7:36-38 may be related to the Stoics' virtue of "self-control" and their description of the wise and good man.<sup>260</sup> However, Paul's rationale in 1 Cor 7:37 is more closely related to one's non-sexual perception towards women rather than one's self-control over one's own sexual appetite. It resembles the description of the pure mind and heart in *T. Benj.* 8:1-3. This change of mind takes place when one cleaves (προσκολλάω) one's self to goodness and love (*T. Benj.* 8:1). This verb is used in LXX Gen 2:24<sup>261</sup> for marital union and an expression of one's total trust in the Lord in Deut 11:22, Josh 23:8 and Ps 73:28. Therefore, if one puts all one's trust in the Lord and has a heart totally cleaved to the goodness and love of the Lord, one is already "married" to the Lord and is able to overcome sexual temptation.

Joseph is an archetypal example of one who overcame sexual temptation many times even *before* he was married. To a certain extent *T. Jos.* advocates the virtue of self-control (*T. Jos.* 9:3) but attributes the triumph over sexual temptation more to the deliverance of the God of Israel himself (*T. Jos.* 2:2) as well as fasting and prayer (*T. Jos.* 4:8; 10:2-3). His fear of the Lord becomes his shelter from the pollution of sexual seduction. The virtue of self-control is a fruit of one's trust and fear of God. This emphasis of monotheistic Jewish piety shows a further critical distance of sexual ethics between *T. 12 Patr.* and Hellenistic Stoicism. Finally, Joseph got married, but apparently not for the purpose of avoiding sexual immorality nor because he lacked self-control.

In conclusion, I agree with Rosner that Paul may bear the story of the twelve sons of Israel in mind, both in Genesis and *T. 12 Patr.*, when he addresses the issue of sexual

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<sup>260</sup> Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 202-5.

<sup>261</sup> Note that this OT verse is quoted by Paul in 1 Cor 6:16. The significance of this quotation for Paul's argument will be expounded in section 4.8.3 and 5.2 of this study.

immorality and marriage in 1 Cor 5-7. For God's people in general, getting married is one effective way of keeping them from sexual immorality. For those like Joseph with pure minds and hearts resulting from an awareness of the presence of God, he is able to look at any charming woman without a lustful mind. He does not need marriage to protect him from committing sexual sin so he is free to be single or to get married.

### 3.3.2 Satan in the *Testament of Job*

The term Beliar / Satan/ Devil appears in *T. Job* 3:3, 6; 4:4; 6:4; 7:6, 12; 16:2; 17:1; 20:1; 23:1, 3, 11; 26:6; 27:1, 6 and 41:5. Besides these terms, Satan is also depicted as the evil one referred in the hymn of Eliphaz in *T. Job* 43:3-12.

*T. Job* is rightly regarded as a Midrashic interpretation of the Book of Job in LXX and many new plots are added to interpret the original story. The story framework of *T. Job* is adopted mainly from LXX Job 1-2, 29-31 and 42:7-17<sup>262</sup> so it is reasonable to regard its original language as Greek.<sup>263</sup> The format resembles the tradition of *T. 12 Patr.*

Concerning its provenance, the position of R. P. Spittler is representative of the mainstream scholarly opinion:

The Testament of Job was almost certainly written in Greek, probably during the first century B.C. or A.D., and possibly among the Egyptian Jewish sect called the

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<sup>262</sup> R. P. Spittler, "Testament of Job: A New Translation and Introduction," in *OTP*, 1: 829-68.[p.831]

<sup>263</sup> R. P. Spittler, "Testament of Job: A New Translation and Introduction," 830. *Contra* Davila, who has pointed out from the recent full publication of a Coptic version in the 5<sup>th</sup> century that the question of original language of *T. Job* should remain open. See Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha*, 196-7.

Therapeutae, described extensively by Philo in his tract *Vita contemplativa*...the work is essentially Jewish in character.<sup>264</sup>

However, this notion of pre-Christian Jewish provenance has recently been challenged by William C. Gruen. He proposes that *T. Job*, at least the first twenty-seven chapters, was written in the early to mid-second century in Roman Egypt; his notion is based on the unusual Jewish violent attacks against pagan temples. Although *Jub.* 12:12-24 also records similar events about Abraham burning the house of idols, evidence of acts of violence against foreign cults from Diaspora Jews is rare. The historical context of the revolt of Diaspora Jews in Egypt in the mid-second century provides the best context for understanding Job's instigation of destroying a pagan temple by force in *T. Job* 5.<sup>265</sup>

I deem this new challenge unsuccessful. It is true that actual violence against pagan temples is rare in the Diaspora Jewish tradition but serious antagonism against the Egyptian cultic practice had existed among Jews in Egypt for a long time before Christ, probably beginning in the Ptolemaic period:

In the late Ptolemaic period...the Jews were once expelled from Egypt as lepers and were characterized by their hatred of religion: these were the sort of people who...destroyed all temples and altars (*apud* Josephus, *C Ap* 1.309). The bone of contention was what Josephus rightly calls the incompatibility of religious customs (*C Ap* 1.224). On the one side is an ancient and sophisticated Egyptian culture, focused in a religious tradition whose animal cults attracted immense popular devotion. On the other, a community of Jews who (with rare exceptions) scorned the animal cults as

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<sup>264</sup> R. P. Spittler, "Testament of Job: A New Translation and Introduction," 833.

<sup>265</sup> William C. Gruen, III, "Seeking a Context for the Testament of Job," *JSP* 18.3 (2009): 163-79.



absurd, and delighted to describe their adherents as sharing the characteristics of the beasts they worshipped.<sup>266</sup>

Thus, *T. Job* 1-5 can also be interpreted as an expression of the zeal of Egyptian Jews against temple sacrifices in the late Ptolemaic period, especially when the author calls the idol temple the place of Satan. Moreover, the repeated emphasis on the care of the poor in the first twenty-seven chapters had existed in ancient Jewish tradition for a long time and was not confined to the Jewish revolt in the second century in Roman Egypt. Therefore, I deem the arguments of Spittler more reasonable: *T. Job* is a pre-Christian Egyptian Jewish text and was written probably at the beginning of the first century.<sup>267</sup>

The pictures of Beliar/ Satan/ Devil in *T. Job* can be summarised as follows:

- i) Satan as the master and object of worship in any idol temple: 2:1-4; 3:3, 6; 4:4.
- ii) Satan as a deceiver, making use of deceived people to carry out his plan:  
6:4; 7:6, 12 (disguised as a beggar, made use of the door maid to threaten Job);

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<sup>266</sup> John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora : from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE - 117 CE)* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1996), 45-6.

<sup>267</sup> Like Gruen, James Davila proposes another historical context for *T. Job*. Davila has shown that the main themes of *T. Job* are consonant with the context of Egyptian Christianity and so this work is probably written in Christian circles in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. See Davila, *The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha*, 197-9. However, he has not rigorously argued why Egyptian Christianity in the 5<sup>th</sup> century provides a better account than the historical context of Egyptian Jewish circles in the first century for the background of *T. Job*, while the latter can also explain all main themes of *T. Job*. In addition to the consideration that the author of *T. Job* still holds a positive view towards animal sacrifices, rituals to the Lord for atonement of sins and contributions of good works (charity to the poor) of the father for redeeming the sins of arrogance of his children (*T. Job* 15:4-9), the notion of Jewish authorship in the 1<sup>st</sup> century is deemed more reasonable than Davila's proposal of Christian authorship in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century.

23:1-11; 26:6; 27:1, 6 (making use of Job's wife to curse him and make him hopeless, but in vain);

41:5; 42:2 (making use of Job's friend Elihu to accuse him)

iii) Satan as a destroyer / agent who contracts moral impurity to people to attack Job: 16:2; 17:1; 20:1

The critical difference between *T. Job* and the LXX Book of Job is the theme of the anti-idol temple. The story of the suffering of Job was reinterpreted in *T. Job* as a result of his direct action in destroying the idol temple (*T. Job* 4). The occasion of his suffering is added at the beginning of the story, where Job is annoyed by the worship in the idol's temple. In the annoyance of Job, the idol temple and sacrifices are closely related to Satan:

When I was called Jobab, I lived quite near a venerated idol's temple (εἰδωλεῖον). As I constantly saw whole-burnt offerings being offered up there, I began reasoning within myself saying, "Is this really the God who made heaven and earth, the sea too, and our very selves? How shall I know?" (*T. Job* 2:2-4)

This one whose whole-burnt offerings they bring and whose drink offerings they pour is not God. Rather, his is the power of the devil (ἡ δύναμις τοῦ διαβόλου), by whom human nature is deceived. (*T. Job* 3:3)

In the Book of Job, the devil was still counted as an angel of God who worked for God with other angels under His authority (Job 2:1). But in *T. Job*, the devil is portrayed as the power behind the idol's temple. The whole-burnt offerings and drink offering are offered to the devil and can no longer be counted as offerings to the creator God (*T. Job* 3:3). The idol's temple is identified as *the place of Satan* (*T. Job* 3:6; 4:4) and there is a clear boundary between the devil and God. He held his own kingdom, had his own throne, was forgotten by

the Lord and abandoned by the holy ones (*T. Job* 43:7, 10). Therefore, when the idol temple is regarded as the place of Satan, it also implies that it is NOT a place of God. Therefore, Job's query in *T. Job* 2-3 is justified: people were deceived into making sacrifices to the created Satan, not to the God who created heaven and earth.<sup>268</sup>

In conclusion, Satan is first depicted as the master of the pagan temple who received offerings there. Right after Job made up his mind to destroy the idol's temple, Satan used various means to take revenge against him so the suffering of Job in LXX Job is interpreted as the revenge of Satan resulting from Job's anti-idol piety (*T. Job* 4:4).

### **3.3.2.1 Relevance to 1 Cor 8-11:1**

The identification of Satan with idolatry is relevant to this study. It further demonstrates that idol sacrifices, where food offered to idols is included, are closely related to Satan. The attendance at an idol's temple is identified with one's presence in the place of Satan. First Corinthians 10:20-21 finds parallels in *T. Job* 3:3 where both the whole-burnt offerings (including food offered to idols) and the drink offerings (including the cup for libation ritual in the temple) are offered to the power of the devil and not to God. *If Paul shares the common tradition with T. Job that an idol temple is the place of Satan, Paul is unlikely to hold an indifferent stance to the knowers reclining at the table in such a place (1 Cor 8:10).* It is sufficient for Paul to regard the person as making a friendly connection with Satan just from his presence in the idol temple—the place of Satan.

The second picture of Satan is also relevant to this study as it is again related to the theme of idolatry. When one establishes connection with Satan, no matter whether one is

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<sup>268</sup> While Satan in *T. Job* no longer worked for God, it was still under the control of the Lord. It was still necessary for Satan to obtain authority from the Lord first before he took away the wealth of Job. See *T. Job* 8.

aware of it (Elihu) or not (Job's wife Sitis), one is snared by Satan to fulfil his plan for bringing destruction to his people. Sitis was cheated and enchanted by Satan to push Job to commit suicide when he was facing physical affliction (*T. Job* 25:9-10). Although Job triumphed over it by patience, Sitis was regarded "as one of the senseless women who misguide their husbands' sincerity." (*T. Job* 26:6) The comments to Elihu are worse, while Job's other three friends received forgiveness from God for their sins, Elihu was identified with Satan as the evil one and should not be remembered among the living (*T. Job* 43:5, 17). Satan is doomed to failure and his kingdom is predestined to be defeated by God (*T. Job* 43:5-12). This indicates that God's people should not establish any social association with Satan or they may face the same destruction.

These messages find echoes in Paul's solemn warnings against attending idol meals in 1 Cor 8:10-12 and 10:6-30. Attendance in an idol temple is not an option for God's people because it connotes one making sacrifices to Satan, making it possible to be manipulated by Satan to fulfil his evil plan. Any people of God who participate in Satan's evil plan are liable to share the destruction of alienation of Satan from God.

In conclusion, Satan in *the T. Job* is closely related with idol worship and God's people should imitate Job and go against idol sacrifices. Paul seems to share the same perspective about Satan as *T. Job* at least on the issue of eating meals in the idol temple.

### **3.3.3 Satan in other Pseudepigrapha before Paul**

In other Pseudepigrapha, Beliar/ Satan/ Devil are scattered and not frequently mentioned in any one text. Beliar/ Satan/ Devil exists in *Sib. Or.* 2:167; *Liv. Pro.* 4:7, 21; 17:2; *Mart. Isa* 1:9,

11; 3:2-3, 8, 18; *Apoc. Mos.* (=Greek Life of Adam and Eve) 15:3; 16:1-2, 5; 17:1, 4; 21:3; 3 *Bar.* 4:8; *T. Mos.* 1:2, 8-10; *Jub.* 10:8; *Jos. Asen.* 12:9.<sup>269</sup>

There are many overlapping depictions of Satan in these Pseudepigrapha with those already found in the DSS, the *T. 12 Patr.* and the *T. Job.* For instance, Satan is associated with covenant-breaking King Manasseh and cutting the prophet Isaiah in two with a wood-saw (*Mart. Isa.* 1:9, 11).<sup>270</sup>

Satan still tempts people to sin. At the beginning of human history, he tempted the serpent, the serpent became his tool to seduce Eve and finally Eve his tool to seduce Adam. The false prophet Melchias is also called the devil because he made false prophecy to lead Israel astray. Satan contracted deceptions one by one and worked behind the deceived to deceive others (*Apoc. Mos.* 15:3; 16:1-2, 5; 17:1, 4; 21:3; *Mart. Isa.* 3:18). After the global flood in Noah's time, Satan still asked for a tenth of the rebellious angels, the demons, to be its helpers to tempt people (*Jub.* 10:8). It is a deceiver who will confuse the holy, chosen people at the end times (*Sib. Or.* 2:167).

Satan is also strongly associated with idol worship. Manasseh's making silver and gold idols was equivalent to service of the devil and his angels (*Mart. Isa.* 3:2-3, 8). After Aseneth converted to the God of Joseph, she was aware that the father of her traditional Egyptian gods

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<sup>269</sup> The Greek term Beliar/ Satan/ Devil is also found in *Sib. Or.* 3:63, 73, *Apoc. Sedr.* 4:5, 3 *Bar.* 4:8, *T. Sol.* 15:11, *Hist. Rech.* 7:8; 19:1-2, 20:1; 21:1, 4; 22:2. However, these texts are probably written after 1 Cor and so they are not considered for this study. See *OTP* 1: 360, 606, 656, 940-3; 2: 444-5.

<sup>270</sup> The numbering of *Mart. Asen. Isa.* 1-5 (*Mart. Isa.*) follows the Greek text in BibleWorks 8. While the numbering of the first chapter is identical (except Greek 1:14 is absent in the English translation), the Greek text *Mart. Isa.* 3:1-18 in BibleWorks 8 is equivalent to the English translation of *Mart. Isa.* 2—3:12 in *OTP* 2: 157-60 which is pre-Christian. See M. A. Knibb, "Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah: A New Translation and Introduction," in *OTP* 2: 143-76 [pp.147-9] for the complicated composite character of *Mart. Isa.* and the pre-Christian dating of the Greek text *Mart. Isa.* 1-3.

was Satan (*Jos. Asen.* 12:9) and that her participation in worship through her offerings to idols and the table of gods of the Egyptians defiled her mouth (*Jos. Asen.* 12:5). The tradition that regards eating idol food as defilement is relevant to Paul's attitude to the issue of eating food sacrificed to idols in 1 Cor 8-11:1 and it would clearly have been culturally plausible for Paul to adopt a negative attitude to eating idol food if he shared a common tradition with the author of *Joseph and Aseneth*.<sup>271</sup>

The identification of Satan with the wild beast is shown in the *Lives of the Prophets* 4:7 where in his prayer, Daniel explained the crazy behaviour of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar as being like a beast because he was now yoked with Beliar. Beliar not only destroyed this king but will slaughter people all over the earth in the end times (*Liv. Pro.* 4:7, 21).

The only novel idea about Satan in the Pseudepigrapha not found in the DSS, the *T. 12 Patr.* and the *T. Job* is recorded in *Lives of the Prophets* 17:2 where Satan played tricks to delay Nathan from going to warn king David and as a result, David committed the sin of murder. Nathan could only announce God's judgment to David instead of warning him (*Liv. Pro.* 17:2) but the prophet's delay can still be counted as the work of the tempter removing obstacles from the path of sinning against God.

### 3.4. Conclusion

Traditionally, we regard Satan/ Belial as an enemy of God. It is usually regarded as the ruler of the world outside the community of God's people. It stands for the outside political powers or military leaders that attack God's people. From the survey above, this traditional

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<sup>271</sup> Alex Cheung has pointed out numerous instances of echoes of *Joseph and Aseneth* in 1 Cor 8-10. See Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 51-55, 104, 121.

understanding can find support from DSS (e.g. section 3.2.4) and Pseudepigrapha (e.g. in section 3.3.1.2 where we find evidence that Satan deceives outsiders in *T. 12 Patr.*).

Whenever Belial is regarded as an outsider, it is mainly in the context of war such as the cosmic war of Kittim in the future depicted in the *War Scroll*, or the exodus event in the history of Israel where Belial was regarded as the force behind Pharoah (CD-A V, 15-21).

A careful observation, however, tells us some more important aspects about the identity of Belial. This answers our first key question of this study: How does Paul identify and handle betraying insiders? It can be summarised as follows:

Belial tempts insiders to betray their pledge to God. When the context is related to identity formation of the community, Belial is mainly associated with betrayers of God or tempters seducing insiders to rebel against God, for example, as covenant breakers in 1QS, seducing people to apostasy through temptation in CD and some thanksgiving hymns in 1QH-A, and making up falsehood to confuse God's people to wander away from God in the Halakhic texts. 11Q13 is the exception, where the identity of Belial can be treated as an outsider or insider.

Paul probably shares these common traditions about Satan with DSS. In section 2.2.4, I have pointed out that identifying betrayers within church is one common theme of 1 Cor 5, 8 and 10. Paul identifies a subgroup within the insiders who should neither be treated as ordinary insiders nor outsiders. They are sexually immoral brothers (1 Cor 5) and idolatrous brothers (1 Cor 8, 10) with whom the church should not even eat. Moreover, the categories of sin that Paul explicitly condemns correspond to the three nets of Belial in DSS (CD-A IV, 15-19) which seduce God's people to break their covenant: sexual immorality corresponding to incest in 1 Cor 5-6, unrighteous gain of wealth corresponding to the unjust civil disputes between brothers in 1 Cor 6:1-11 and defilement of the temple corresponding to the issue of

eating idol food in 1 Cor 8—11:1 (see section 3.2.2.1 and 3.2.2.3). In addition to the linguistic parallel of 1 Cor 5:5 with certain texts in DSS (e.g. 1QS II, 5-7 in section 3.2.1.1; CD-A VIII, 2-3 in section 3.2.2.3), it is therefore reasonable to conclude that *Paul adopts the view of treating Belial as apostasy or seducing God's people to commit apostasy in DSS and applies it to the identity formation of the Church of Christ in 1 Cor 5-11:1.*

The notion of "Satan as a symbol of apostasy" finds support in the Pseudepigrapha as well. According to the Pseudepigrapha, although it continues to send the spirit of error to outsiders, Satan mainly works in insiders to lead God's people to sin against him and against each other. It leads the Patriarchs to attack Joseph as well as Job's wife and friends to attack Job. From the starting point of the process, Satan is involved in the trajectory of God's people's sins against Him. We can find direct reference of incest in *T.Reu.* When Reuben committed sexual immorality listed in Lev 18:8—having sex with his father's wife, his destination would be Satan. For sexual immorality in general, Satan plays the role of tempter and seduces the patriarchs to become betrayers of their family members (e.g. to Reuben's father Jacob, Judah's son, and to their brother Joseph).

The Idol temple is the home of Satan and so it is a place that tempts God's people to commit apostasy (*T.Job*). If God's people participate in things offered to idols, they are actually establishing association with the master of the idol temple, Satan. Then they are contaminated by Satan with moral impurity and these sinning insiders may continue to pass the moral impurity on to other insiders.

There are traditions reflected in Jewish literature which exhort insiders to be faithful to their marriage, to keep a pure mind and their undivided faithfulness to God as antidote for sexual immorality (DSS and *T. 12 Patr.*; see section 3.3.1.3) and to maintain zeal not to participate in things offered to idols (*T. Job*). All these traditions are related to the works of



Satan. They reveal the social function of Satan language: setting a social space for insiders. Once the insiders come into this social region defined by Satan, they become betraying insiders.

How does Paul identify and handle betraying insiders? First, by sharing the ideology of DSS mainly expressed in the Rule of Community and Damascus Rules, Paul identifies those sinning insiders listed out in 5:11 as apostates. The church should take immediate actions against these betrayers, like the Qumran or Damascus community would have done against covenant-breaking members (see section 3.2.1.1). This explains why Paul mainly rebukes the church for not taking actions against the sinning brothers instead of rebuking those sinning brothers in 1 Cor 5:1-2 and 6:1-5. Paul's concern is the group identity of the community. If the community does not make judgment against betrayers and deal with them accordingly, the whole community may also become betrayers against God. Moreover, the whole community will face attack from Satan who can find partners within the community to attack each other, like Job's wife and his friends; he can also find partners within the community to tempt others to sin, like the temptation of the serpent to Eve and Eve to Adam.

Secondly, Paul indicates some kind of liminal space for these deviant insiders and punishes them with temporal conditional social ostracism. *Contra* David Raymon Smith, the thought world of Paul in 1 Cor 5:5 is not PGM in the Graeco-Roman world but rather the covenant breakers in DSS and Pseudepigrapha with numerous direct references to Satan. If such sectarian and legally rigorous groups like the Damascus community prohibit execution of apostates but offer repentant apostates re-entrance to the group after seven years (my exposition after CD-A XII, 2-3 in section 3.2.2.3), it would have been unusual for Paul to deliver the order of execution in 1 Cor 5:5, no matter whether it is a fatal curse from the Corinthian community or an actual execution. In short, "hand this person over to Satan" is not a curse

formula. Paul's suggestion of handling betrayers is confined to a *temporal conditional* social ostracism. Like the Qumran community's expulsion against the covenant breaker who is still under the supervision of community members for seven years (CD-A XII, 5) which shows that the expulsion should be understood metaphorically as temporal re-education, Paul's command "hand this person over to Satan" is also a temporary disciplinary measure against the sinning insider. The whole church should not even eat with him until he repents from his sin of sexual immorality. For all sinning insiders stated in 1 Cor 5:11 which include the errant brother in 1 Cor 5:1, Paul creates a liminal space within the church group and treats them neither like outsiders nor normal insiders by the cypher of Satan in 1 Cor 5:5.<sup>272</sup> The reference of Damascus community's treatment against covenant breakers explains well Paul's association of Satan with the creation of a liminal space beside insiders and outsiders.

Combining the above insights, 1 Cor 5:5, 7:5 and 10:20-21 are taken as Paul's mechanism of guarding insiders from becoming betrayers and are interpreted as follows: "For the destruction of the flesh" means letting this person share the same destiny as Satan. Similar to the tradition in DSS and Pseudepigrapha, *"hand over this man to Satan" in 1 Cor 5:5a means: treat this man as an apostate; take him to the place where apostates are supposed to go. "The flesh" refers to the whole person, not just part of him. Paul's emphasis is on the proper attitude and action the church should take against this covenant-breaking person. If the church does nothing about it, she will be classified into the same category of this errant Christian (apostasy) and share the same destiny of destruction. Thus, the spirit in the last phrase of 1 Cor 5:5, namely, "the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord," refers to the spirit*

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<sup>272</sup> For the reasons why these sinning insiders in 1 Cor 5:11 are not regarded by Paul as outsiders or normal insiders, see section 2.2.4.2.

of the church, not the errant Christian.<sup>273</sup> The church should consider the preservation of her identity in Christ before His judgment as having first priority (1 Cor 4:4). Paul applies this principle to those married Christian couples committing sexual immorality (1 Cor 7:5) and those attending idol meals, all of whom are regarded as apostates. The church should take similar measures against them as against the errant brother in 5:5 and those listed in 5:11.

Paul's use of Satan language is for the social function of setting regions within the community: an internal zone of betrayal. Yet, all of these betrayal activities take place in the ordinary social lives of believers, for instance, in their marriage (5:5; 7:5) and attending social meals (10:20-21). Putting it in positive terms, Paul expects the church to monitor the ordinary social lives of insiders. The behaviours of insiders in their existing social network with outsiders are crucial for determining one's genuine faith in Christ. To those betrayers, the church should not expel them; rather, she should keep them within the community but take immediate action against them with social ostracism.

This study does *not* imply that Paul *always* refer to apostates whenever Satan or devil is mentioned in Pauline letters. Satan/ devil/ Beliar in Pauline letters is not univocal. Its meaning varies in different contexts. Due to the equivocal meanings of the Satan language in

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<sup>273</sup> This interpretation is mainly based on an observation that Paul is concerned with the well-being and the proper response of the whole church rather than the errant Christian in 5:1-8. The word πνεῦμα exists three times in 5:3-5. In 5:3-4, the repetition of Paul's "spirit" emphasises the solidarity of Paul with the whole Corinthian church, not Paul's own soul after death. And as I shall show later in section 4.4.2, Paul's leaven metaphor in the ensuing context symbolises a problem of the Corinthian church. The "leaven" does not stand for the errant Christian. Thus, Paul's concern in the preceding (5:3-4) and ensuing context (5:6-8) consistently addresses the well-being of the whole church. Therefore, it is reasonable to interpret this purpose clause in 5:5b as Paul's concern for the whole church instead of the individual errant Christian, no matter whether the spirit refers to God's Spirit present in the Corinthian church or a generic term standing for the whole church. See Collins, *First Corinthians*, 208; Fitzmyer, *1 Corinthians*, 239-40.

Pauline letters in general, it shows how remarkable it is for the univocal meaning of Satan language in 1 Cor 5:5, 7:5 and 10:20-21. All three instances find strikingly similar thematic or rationale parallels in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Pseudepigrapha. Based on these parallels, *I argue that whenever Paul mentions Satanic terms in the context of social boundary setting or rebuking the sins of insiders, Satan implicitly stands for apostates or the act of tempting insiders to become apostates.* Paul shares a common tradition reflected in DSS and Pseudepigrapha to identify and handle betrayers through the rhetoric of naming the Satan / satanic activity. This connotation of Satan as apostasy can be found in other Pauline letters in a more direct and explicit expression (e.g. 2 Cor 2:11; 11:14; 1 Tim 1:20; 5:14-5). This interpretation also explains all the above cited verses in 1 Cor, in particular 5:5, in a sensible and coherent way.

In this chapter, some remarkable parallels between Satan in 1 Cor 5—11:1 and ancient Jewish literature have been found. They shed light on our understanding of 1 Cor 5:5, 7:5 and 10:16-21 and suggest that Paul probably holds a negative view towards eating idol food in general. However, the point of contact is narrow as it only revolves around the concept of Satan and its relation to apostate insiders. Moreover, it is only limited to the understanding of the thought world of Paul. The thought world or social world of the audience has not been taken into account.

In chapters 4 and 5, two contact points of Paul and the audience will be explored. The focus of the contact point is Scripture and the social world both shared by Paul and the audience. If Paul uses the above Jewish literature as the foundation for identity formation among the Christian community, it is reasonable to believe that he has also used sacred Scripture. If we put our feet in the shoes of the audience by considering their social lives and the tacit social values prevalent in their surrounding culture, we can appreciate the significant

impact this letter had on identity formation among the first audience. This letter does convey new values that are at odds with their common sense. Paul delivers challenging messages which require substantial changes in believers' social lives and values as response. We will pursue this further in the next two chapters.

# Chapter 4

## Echoes of Scripture and Identity Formation in 1 Cor 5-11:1 PART 1

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In his work *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, Richard B. Hays proposes the approach of intertextual echoes of Scripture for interpreting the Pauline Epistles: interpreting the rhetorical purpose of Paul's quotation / allusion to the scripture by recalling the broader context of the quoted/alluded scripture. Following this work, a considerable amount of literature has been published adopting this approach to interpret the Pauline corpus resulting in fruitful exegetical insights.<sup>274</sup> In this and the next chapter, I will adopt this approach for rhetorical analysis of Paul's use of Scripture in 1 Cor 5-11:1. The process is as follows:

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<sup>274</sup> Selected scholarly monographs and papers which interpret Pauline Epistles mainly by the echoes of Scripture since the publication of Hays' book *Echoes of Scripture*, ordered first from the latest date of publication : Matthew S. Harmon, *She Must and Shall Go Free: Paul's Isaianic Gospel in Galatians* (BZNTW 168; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010); Steve Moyise, "The Minor Prophets in Paul," in *The Minor Prophets in the New Testament* (ed. Maarten J.J. Menken and Steve Moyise; LNTS 377; London: T & T Clark International, 2009), 97-114; Stanley E. Porter and Christopher D. Stanley, eds., *As It is Written : Studying Paul's Use of Scripture* (SBLSymS 50; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008); Benjamin L. Gladd, *Revealing the Mystery*; Christopher A. Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians* (Biblical Interpretation Series 96; Leiden: Brill, 2008); Roy E. Ciampa, "Deuteronomy in Galatians and Romans," in *Deuteronomy in the New Testament*, 99-117; Rosner, "Deuteronomy in 1 and 2 Corinthians," in *Deuteronomy in the New Testament*, 118-35; Gerd Häfner, "Deuteronomy in the Pastoral Epistles," in *Deuteronomy in the New Testament*, 136-151; James W. Aageson, "Written Also for Our Sake: Paul's Use of Scripture in the Four Major Epistles, with a Study of 1 Corinthians 10," in *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament* (ed. Stanley E. Porter; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 152-181; J. Ross Wagner, "Isaiah in Romans and Galatians," in *Isaiah in the New Testament* (ed. Maarten J.J. Menken and Steve Moyise; London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 117-32; Florian Wilk, "Isaiah in 1 and 2 Corinthians," in *Isaiah in the New Testament*, 133-58; Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Brian J. Abasciano, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9.1-9: An Intertextual and Theological Exegesis* (LNTS 301; London: T&T Clark International, 2005); McDonough, "Competent To Judge," 99-102; Sylvia

The scriptures echoed in 1 Cor 5-11:1 were identified by certain criteria. Once the OT texts were located and marked, I applied Hays' inter-textual echoes approach to interpreting the rhetorical purpose of Paul when citing the texts. This involves the following two questions which focus on the author and the audience respectively:

- a) How does Paul use Scripture to differentiate insiders from outsiders?
- b) How are echoes of Scripture understood by his audience as related to their ordinary social lives and assumed social values?

#### 4.1 Three Criteria for Identifying the Echoes

All proposed OT echoes must be examined using three criteria: word agreement, rarity and availability. Does the word, phrase or concept correspond to specific OT texts (word

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C. Keesmaat, "The Psalms in Romans and Galatians," in *The Psalms in the New Testament* (ed. Maarten J.J. Menken and Steve Moyise; London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 139-161; H.H. Drake Williams, III, "The Psalms in 1 and 2 Corinthians," in *The Psalms in the New Testament*, 163-80; Thorsten Moritz, "The Psalms in Ephesians and Colossians," in *The Psalms in the New Testament*, 181-95; J. Ross Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul in Concert in the Letter of Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); B. J. Oropeza, "Echoes of Isaiah in the Rhetoric of Paul: New Exodus, Wisdom, and the Humility of the Cross in Utopian-Apocalyptic Expectations," in *The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the New Testament* (ed. Duane F. Watson; SBLSymS 14; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 87-112; Edith M. Humphrey, "Ambivalent Apocalypse: Apocalyptic Rhetoric and Intertextuality in 2 Corinthians," in *The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the New Testament*, 113-35; James D. Hester, "Apocalyptic Discourse in 1 Thessalonians," in *The Intertexture of Apocalyptic Discourse in the New Testament*, 137-63; R. E. Ciampa, *The Presence and Function of Scripture in Galatians 1 and 2* (WUNT 2.102; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998); Peter S. Enns, "The 'Moveable Well' in 1 Cor 10:4: An Extrabiblical Tradition in an Apostolic Text," *BBR* 6 (1996): 23-38; Peder Borgen, "In Accordance with the Scriptures," in *Early Christian Thought in its Jewish Context* (ed. J. Barclay and J. Sweet; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 193-206; Rosner, *Paul, Scripture and Ethics*; James M. Scott, "Paul's Use of Deuteronomic Tradition," *JBL* 112.4 (1993): 645-65; L. Ann Jervis, "'But I Want You to Know . . .': Paul's Midrashic Intertextual Response to the Corinthian Worshipers (1 Cor 11:2-16)," *JBL* 112.2 (1993) : 231-46; Gail R. O'Day, "Jeremiah 9:22-23 and 1 Corinthians 1:26-31: A Study in Intertextuality," *JBL* 109.2 (1990): 259-67; Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1989).

agreement)? Is the concept, word or phrase seldom found in other contemporary literature in Paul's time (rarity)? Are those scriptures available and recognisable to Paul and the Corinthian church audience (availability)? This includes any literary sign in 1 Corinthians that enables the Corinthian audience to recognise the alluded texts.<sup>275</sup>

The criterion of rarity is a key to ascertain whether a phrase is an intended quotation / echo, Paul's own words or his allusion to other traditions like Graeco-Roman literature. For instance, I judge 5:13b to be a direct quotation from the scripture although there is no formal quotation formula like "as it is written," because the whole phrase ἐξάρατε τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν of 5:13b is rare, besides its striking word agreement with several OT texts. Raymond F. Collins observed:

That Paul is nonetheless citing a text is confirmed by his use of the verb "remove" (*exairō*) and the substantivized adjective "the evil one" (*ponēron*). "Remove" is hapax in the NT; "evil" is hapax in 1 Corinthians. "From your very midst" (*ex hymōn autōn*) is, moreover, the only NT use of *autos* in the usual reflexive manner of classical and Hellenistic Greek (see BDF 288.1).<sup>276</sup>

Therefore, the rarity of the terms or concepts becomes an important criterion in identifying quotations from or allusions to the scripture.

It should be noted that these three criteria function as filters only. They do not necessarily guarantee one specific text in the OT alluded to in 1 Corinthians. For instance,

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<sup>275</sup> These three criteria are modified from Christopher A. Beetham's criteria for determining the existence of an allusion. He proposes three criteria: availability, word agreement with rarity and essential interpretative link. See Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians*, 28-32. For the present purpose of study, I do not differentiate echoes from allusions.

<sup>276</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 224.



there are strong echoes of biblical stories in the discourse 1 Cor 10:1-22. But it may not be possible to identify the specific scriptures alluded to from this discourse even after filtering with the above three criteria.

Richard Hays has proposed interpreting 1 Cor 10:1-22 through the lens of Deut 32.<sup>277</sup> One piece of evidence is that Deut 32 is repeatedly echoed in this paragraph and Deut 32:21 is directly quoted in Rom 10:19. One question that needs to be asked, however, is whether this interpretation resolves the interpretation crux in 1 Cor 10:4: why does Paul identify the rock with Christ? In LXX the rock appears only once in Deut 32:13, where the rock does not refer to God or the Messiah. It is only in the Hebrew Bible that the rock repeatedly refers to the title of God (vv.4, 15, 18, 30, 31) but the Corinthian Christians were unlikely to be able to read the Hebrew. Thus, even Hays admits that “the echo effect would still not be audible....The Rock echo lies entombed in a Hebrew subtext.”<sup>278</sup>

James W. Aageson has rightly pointed out the problem of Hays’ interpretation of 1 Cor 10:4:

Echoes, to continue Richard Hays’s metaphor, can be notoriously difficult to control; and, even when they are heard, they are frequently hard to understand. They reverberate here and there, often with little discernible pattern. To focus on 1 Cor 10:4 as a transformed echo of Deuteronomy 32 is, I submit, to focus on the background noise, which is certainly audible in the text.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 94.

<sup>278</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 94.

<sup>279</sup> Aageson, “Written Also for Our Sake,” 179.

This does not mean that the inter-textual echoes method is invalid, but in 1 Cor 10, the stories recalled by Paul were recorded in numerous places in the OT, in Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Psalms, so it is unrealistic to use just one specific OT pericope to interpret 1 Cor 10. The interpretive key still lies in the context of 1 Cor 10 itself.

## 4.2 OT Allusions in 1 Cor 5: Pentateuch and Sirach

The Jewish character of 1 Cor 5 is indelible. Right at the beginning 5:1 the phrase “father’s wife” *γυναικά πατρός* is hapax in the New Testament and exists only in the Torah: Lev 18:8, 20:11, Deut 23:1 and 27:20. The absence of explanation for condemning this romantic relation as “sexual immorality” *πορνεία* by Paul is awkward here. It is taken for granted as wrongdoing in our present culture, but from my historical research into the social ethos in Roman Corinth (see later section 4.3), this was not the case in the culture around Corinthian and other Gentile churches. Stoicism is not likely to be the philosophy to which Paul appeals, for long-term loving relations with one’s stepmother does not entail loss of self-control in sexual desire. Thus, labelling this stepmother-son union as sexual immorality is at odds with the surrounding culture and therefore an appeal to the tradition of Scripture is the most reasonable explanation for regarding this incestuous union as sexual immorality. Thus it satisfies the criteria of word agreement and rarity.

What about the criterion of availability? As Paul has explicitly quoted Lev 18:5 in Gal 3:12 and Rom 10:5, it shows that he is familiar with Lev 18. Moreover, Lev 18 and 20 are regarded by Jews as laws against sexual immorality in spite of the absence of the term *πορνεία* in these texts. Thus, when Paul, at the beginning categorises this event as *πορνεία*, it is reasonable for him to be recalling Lev 18:8. From his teaching in the previous letter, about not associating with sexually immoral people (5:9), we know that Paul has already taught the Corinthians about sexual immorality and required them not to associate with sexually immoral

people. Thus, he may have taught them what kind of sexually immoral behaviour they should abstain from by appealing to Lev 18 and 20. Moreover there is strong motivation for the Corinthian Christians, especially the leaders, to read and study Scripture (see Excursus 4). They were likely to read what sexual immorality was from Scripture, even though Paul had not explicitly given a definition, so this allusion passes the test of availability.

In 5:6-8, the distinctive Jewish Festival Feast of Unleavened Bread and Passover is recalled. The keyword “Passover/Passover lamb” *πάσχα* appears most in Exod 12, Num 9 and Deut 16, and the key phrase “Passover is sacrificed” *πάσχα ἐτύθη* in v.7 exists twice as a similar expression in Exod 12 (*θύσατε τὸ πάσχα* in v.21; *θυσία τὸ πάσχα* in 27) but three times in Deut 16 (*θύσεις τὸ πάσχα* in vv.2, 6; *θύσαι τὸ πάσχα* in v.5). On the other hand, the most repeated noun “leaven” *ζύμην* in vv.6-8 appears three times in Exod 12 (vv.15, 19) and twice in Deut 16 (v.3, 4).<sup>280</sup> Finally the verb “celebrate” *ἐορτάζω* exists twice in Exodus 12 (v.14) and only once in Deut 16 (v.15), but neither the phrase *πάσχα ἐτύθη*, the noun *ζύμην* nor the verb *ἐορτάζω* exist in Num 9. In terms of word agreement, Num 9 is eliminated.

In terms of rarity, the festival feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover meal in vv.6-8 are distinctive Jewish customs not found in Graeco-Roman literature and these texts were probably memorised by the Pharisee Paul who may even have hosted the liturgy of the

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<sup>280</sup> Leslie Mitton has pointed out that *ζύμη* should be translated as leaven instead of yeast. Yeast is usually fresh and so the phrase “old yeast” in 5:7 seems to be self-contradictory. Moreover, yeast is not a common item in the ancient world. Leaven, on the other hand, is a portion of the previous week’s dough which is kept and put in the new dough for fermentation. See Leslie Mitton, “New Wine in Old Wine Skins: iv, Leaven,” *The Expository Times* 84 (1973): 339—43. This insightful remark from the historical context of ancient Israel is generally accepted by recent commentators and scholars such as Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 401-3; David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 178-9; May, *The Body for the Lord*, 68-9; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 240-1.

Passover meal or the festival before his conversion. As for the Corinthians, can they recognise the alluding OT texts Exod 12 and Deut 16? Those key phrases, nouns and verbs are clear indicators to suggest Exodus 12 and Deut 16, for *πάσχα* *ἐτύθη*, *ζύμην* and *ἐορτάζω* co-exist only in these two chapters. Even though they may not recognise the echoed OT texts at the first hearing of 1 Corinthians, those three key phrases and words, with their rich imagery, juxtapose together only in these two chapters and they would understand and recognise these two alluded texts after studying the Exodus story. Therefore, Exod 12 and Deut 16 were both available to Paul and the Corinthian audience.

In 5:9-13, Paul clarifies his teachings in his previous letter; the major clarification is the scope of sexually immoral people that the church should take measures against. They do not include outsiders but rather the named brothers committing the vices in 5:11. These six kinds of sinners are hardly derived from the moral rules of the Graeco-Roman world, for idolaters and drunkards were seldom regarded as guilty people in that world.

Rosner has proposed that the vice list in 5:11 is properly related to similar sins described in different chapters of Deuteronomy and both end up with the expulsion formula “cast out this evil person from among us.” (Deut 22:21-22, 23:1; 24:7, 13:2-6 // 17:2-7; 19:16-19; 21:18-21)<sup>281</sup> This would explain why Paul quotes this sentence in 5:13 directly from Deuteronomy.

However, a nuanced examination renders Rosner’s proposal unsound. First, it fails to pass the first criterion of word agreement: none of the terms describing six kinds of sinful brothers in 5:11: *ἡ πόρνος ἡ πλεονέκτης ἡ εἰδωλολάτρης ἡ λοιδορος ἡ μέθυσος ἡ ἄρπαξ*, are found

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<sup>281</sup> See the diagram in Rosner, “Deuteronomy in 1 and 2 Corinthians,” 122. For his detailed exegesis of 1 Cor 5:11, see Rosner, *Paul, Scripture, and Ethics*, 68-70.

in Deuteronomy. Secondly, some associations of these terms with certain sins in Deuteronomy are found wanting. Rosner himself admits that greedy person (ὁ πλεονέκτης) is not found in Deuteronomy. He equates it with “robber” (ὁ ἄρπαξ) and then associates it with Deut 24:7. He uses a grammatical argument to identify the greedy person as a robber: these two terms share the same article and are joined with the conjunction καὶ in 5:10.<sup>282</sup> The key problem with this explanation is that the grammatical argument is not sound. Like the two terms “greedy person” and “robber” in 5:10, the three nouns “world”, “angels” and “mortals” also share the same article τῶν and are joined with the conjunction καὶ in 1 Cor 4:9. Yet, they do not belong to the same class, nor is there any similar meaning between any two of these terms. Moreover, it is difficult to explain why Paul mentions this sin twice in 5:11 if he identifies “robber” with “greedy one.” This problematic association is repeated when Rosner identifies reviler (λοιδορός) with the sin of bearing false witnesses in Deut 19:16-19. If λοιδορός was understood as slanderer, it would have been possible to be related to bearing false witness, but in LXX, this term means contentious, quarrelsome and reviling (Prov 25:24; 26:21; 27:15; Sir 23:8) and seldom refers to making false accusations against somebody in the law court setting. Therefore Rosner’s association of this sin with false witness in Deuteronomy is deemed unconvincing.

Based mainly on word agreement, I suggest these six sins in 5:11 allude to the book “The Wisdom of Ben Sirach” (abbrev. Sirach), not Deuteronomy. Four out of the six kinds of sinner in 5:11 are mentioned in Sirach:

sexually immoral person (πόρνος) in Sir 23:17 (cf. Sir 23:16-18; 41:17),

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<sup>282</sup> Brian S. Rosner, *Greed as Idolatry: The Origin and Meaning of a Pauline Metaphor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 108-9.

greedy person (ἡ πλεονέκτης) in Sir 14:9 (cf. Sir 31:5),

reviler ἡ λοιδορός in Sir 23:8 and

drunkard ἡ μέθυσος in Sir 19:1 and 26:8 (cf. Sir 31:25-31)

Idolater ἡ εἰδωλόλατρες is not found in the whole OT because it is a compound word

“image-worshipper.” However, it is closely related to the admonition regarding giving food to idols in Sir 30:19-20. Concerning the robber ἡ ἄρπαξ, Sir 41:19 teaches that he should be as ashamed for being a thief as those who have committed sexual immorality before their parents (Sir 41:17). In sum, all six sins are mentioned in Sirach and the co-relation is much closer than with Deuteronomy.

In terms of rarity, this vice list in 1 Cor 5:11 rarely exists in Graeco-Roman literature on moral teachings, and while these sins are mentioned in many different scriptures, only Sirach contains four terms from these vice lists. No other books in the Septuagint contain more terms of the vice list than “The Wisdom of Ben Sirach.”

Concerning availability, from the outset this book of Sirach was not as well-known as Deuteronomy to the Corinthian Christians, since Deuteronomy is part of the Torah but Sirach is not. However, “[T]he work was widely circulated and held in high regard by the Jews.”<sup>283</sup> From the Greek prologue, we know that it was translated from Hebrew into Greek in Egypt around 117 B.C. and had become a well-known classic of Jewish literature even among Gentiles<sup>284</sup> and was often cited by people discussing wisdom and the proper application of the

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<sup>283</sup> Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah*, 63.

<sup>284</sup> Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (trans. John Bowden; 2 vols; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 1: 131; 2: 88. [n.181] See also Patrick W. Skehan and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: A New Translation with Notes* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987), 8 for the dating of the Greek translation.

Law. The discovery of a Hebrew copy of “The Wisdom of Ben Sira” in the first century B.C. Jewish community at Masada copied in the style of stichometry and the successive Hebrew and Greek recensions early in the first century B.C. in Palestine “clearly suggests that at least some Jews there accepted the work as sacred and inspired.”<sup>285</sup> Thus, Sirach was available and well-known Jewish literature in Paul’s time both to Jews and Gentiles.

Moreover, the context in 5:9-13 functions as a literary sign to Sirach for the audience. In 5:9-10 Paul corrects their misapplication of his previous teachings on daily life concerning social alienation from sexually immoral people. This teaching on correct application of the truth is strikingly parallel to the well-known nature of Sirach: appropriate application of the Torah to daily life on a regular basis. Paul’s clarification is similar to the purpose of Sirach:

To bolster the faith and confidence of his fellow Jews, Ben Sira published his book.

His purpose was...rather to convince Jews and even well-disposed Gentiles that true wisdom is to be found primarily in Jerusalem and not in Athens, more in the inspired books of Israel than in the clever writings of Hellenistic humanism.<sup>286</sup>

In addition to the frequent moral admonition of Sirach and its representative status of the Jewish wisdom tradition, there are sufficient signs for the Corinthian Christians to recall the book of Sirach in pondering the sources of Paul’s vice list. An implicit sign towards Sirach is in the phrase “wickedness and evil” in 1 Cor 5:8, where Fitzmyer points out that this phrase is derived from Sir 25:17, 19.<sup>287</sup>



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<sup>285</sup> Skehan and Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 20.


<sup>286</sup> Skehan and Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 16.

<sup>287</sup> Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 242.

Therefore, in terms of word agreement in the vice list in 5:11 and similar purpose of practical application of the truth in daily lives, Sirach is deemed a better source of echoes than Deuteronomy in 5:9-13. Although Paul quotes the sentence in 5:13b directly from Deuteronomy, the previous vice list echoes Sirach. Deuteronomy can at most be regarded as a “background voice” in 5:9-13.

The identification of quotations and allusions of the scriptures in 1 Cor 5 is summarised as follows. Symbol  is used to denote direct biblical quotations while  denotes possible echoes or allusions to the scriptures :


5:1 γυναῖκά πατρός  Lev 18:8; 20:11; Deut 23:1; 27:20

5:6-8  Exod 12; Deut 16

πάσχα ἐτύθη  Exod 12:21, 27; Deut 16: 2, 5, 6


Passover sacrificed

ζύμην leaven  Exod 12 :15, 19; Deut 16: 3, 4

ἐορτάζω celebrate  Exodus 12:14; Deut 16:15

κακίας καὶ πονηρίας  derived from Sir 25:17, 19

wickedness and evil

5:11 the list of sinning  sexually immoral person πόρνος in Sir 23:17 (cf. Sir 41:17) ,



brothers                      greedy person ἡ πλεονέκτης in Sir 14:9 (cf. Sir 31:5), reviler ἡ λοιδόρος in Sir 23:8 and drunkard ἡ μέθυσος in Sir 19:1 and 26:8 (cf. Sir 31:25-31); for idolater ἡ εἰδωλολάτρης and the robber ἡ ἄρπαξ, similar meanings but not identical words are found in Sir 30:18-20 and Sir 41:19 respectively.

5:13b ἐξάρατε τὸν

πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν

Deut 13:6; 17:7\*, 12; 19:19\*; 21:21\*; 22:21\*, 22, 24\*; 24:7\*<sup>288</sup>

### 4.3      The Social Context of 1 Cor 5: Stepmother-stepson Union in the First Century

Commentators seem to take it for granted that the incestuous union in 1 Cor 5 is morally unacceptable even in the culture surrounding the Corinthian Christians. It is morally condemned and forbidden by outsiders. They usually quote the words of classical moral philosophers like Cicero (*Pro Cluentio* 5.12-6.14), Dio Cassius (*Roman History* 58.22), Martial (*Epigrams* 4.16), Tacitus (*Annales* 6.19) and Catullus (*The Poems of Gaius Valerius Catulus* 74 and 88-90) to substantiate this claim.<sup>289</sup> Other evidence is from legal literature: the condemnation of incest in Roman law *lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis* and the comments of

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<sup>288</sup> The only difference between 5:13b and the OT texts marked in \* is that the tense of the verb “remove” is future indicative in Deuteronomy instead of imperative in 1 Cor.

<sup>289</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, n.24 in pp.200-1; Hays, *First Corinthians*, 81; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, n.9-10 in pp.385-6; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, n.7 in p.157.

Roman jurist Gaius in AD 161 (*Institutes* 1.63).<sup>290</sup> After all, incest is under the criminal category of *stuprum* (sexual offence) of Augustan *lex Julia* and the convicted could be sentenced to exile on an island.<sup>291</sup>

It is undeniable that this kind of incestuous union was considered condemnable by the moral philosophers and the Roman Law in Paul's time. However, is it a fair reflection of the social norm? If the norm of the society evaluates it as evil, why did the Corinthian Christians not only tolerate it, but were even puffed up with their non-judging position (1 Cor 5:2, 6)?

Few scholars have directly addressed this problem. Alistair Scott May suggests that it may be Paul's rhetorical strategy for pointing out the failure of the Corinthian community. In other words, it is Paul's own speculation about the attitudes of Corinthians towards this issue.<sup>292</sup> In my opinion, the rhetorical tone of Paul here is evident. The phrase "not even among pagans" is most likely rhetorical, for there are cases of one having affairs with his stepmother recorded in the Graeco-Roman literature (e.g. Martial's *Epigrams* 4.16). However, reducing the attitude of the Corinthian church towards this issue as but Paul's own speculation may make Paul subject to the charge of false accusations against the Corinthian Christians.

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<sup>290</sup> Klauck, Hans Josef, *1. Korintherbrief* (Die Neue Echter Bibel: Kommentar zum Neuen Testament mit der Einheitsübersetzung 7; Würzburg : Echter, 1984), 41; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, n.24 in pp.200-1; Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, 79; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, n.8 in p.385; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, n.7 in p.157; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 231.

<sup>291</sup> Jane F. Gardner, *Women in Roman Law & Society* (London & Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986), 125-7. However, there are a number of excuses, such as ignorance of the relationship or ignorance of the Law, for avoiding the charge and "[E]ndogamy was in practice leniently treated." [p.126]

<sup>292</sup> May, *'The Body for the Lord'*, 66. See also Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 1: 370-1.

John K. Chow reconstructs the social network behind the Corinthian church and proposes that this brother, or his deceased father, may be a rich and powerful patron of the church, giving substantial material support, so the Corinthian Christians do not dare criticise his personal affairs.<sup>293</sup> Although sensible and coherent with the social world of Corinth, the scenario is highly speculative as no clue in 1 Corinthians shows his identity. There is no trace of evidence in the Corinthian letter to show that this brother has such influence in the church and Paul is still regarded and acknowledged as patron of the church (1 Cor 4:15). Thus, although we cannot rule out the possibility of Chow's proposal, it cannot be warranted either.

I will assume that 5:1 refers to a real case that happened in the Corinthian church and that it is a stable romantic relation<sup>294</sup> of a Corinthian brother with his stepmother<sup>295</sup> after his father is deceased.<sup>296</sup> Moreover, this romantic relation is publicly known by the Corinthian church because of the boasting of the church (5:2, 6). I will inquire into how people in general in that culture would evaluate this romantic relation, the social ethos towards the romantic union of a man with his stepmother.

In fact, the evidence of the condemnation of incest in the surrounding culture presented so far can be interpreted to support the opposite view: this specific kind of romantic relation

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<sup>293</sup> John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* (JSNTSup 75; Sheffield : JSOT Press, 1992), 130-41.

<sup>294</sup> From the present infinitive tense of ἔχειν, it is likely to be a stable long-term relation. The verb ἔχειν is usually a euphemism of romantic relation which involves sexual intercourse.

<sup>295</sup> It is based on Paul's label of the woman as his "father's wife," not "his mother." This distinction is apparent in Lev 18: 7-8, where "your mother" denotes one's biological mother while "father's wife" is not.

<sup>296</sup> It is based on Paul's use of the term πορνεία (sexual immorality) instead of μοιχοὶ (adultery) to describe this issue, which shows that this is not related to extra-marital affair. It shows that her previous marital relation has ended either by the death of his father or by divorce. But if it is by divorce, she would have no longer been called as the father's wife.

was so prevalent in the society that it brought condemnation from philosophers and the emperor, who called the people back from the prevalent lax moral tolerance to their traditional moral values.

#### 4.3.1 A Condemned Relationship?

First, it should be noted that in the Graeco-Roman world of the first century, it was not difficult for a man to fall in love with his stepmother. The legal marriageable age of women at that time was twelve<sup>297</sup> and the median age of first marriage for women was about twenty years or less.<sup>298</sup> In other words, women were married when they were still teenagers or in their early twenties. Married women usually died before the age of fifty-on because of the physical sufferings of frequent reproduction.<sup>299</sup> Thus, when a man married another teenage girl as his second wife, the age of his son from the deceased mother was probably older than his second wife. Therefore, it was possible that the son, a teenager or a youth in his early twenties, and his young stepmother, also a teenager, fell in love with each other when the father passed away.

A well-known play by Seneca, *Phaedra*, which is contemporary with Paul, begins with the romantic love of Phaedra towards her stepson Hippolytus. The intensity of her love is reflected in the solemn warning of her nurse:

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<sup>297</sup> Richard P. Saller, *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 26. Cf. Jane F. Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society*, 38-39.

<sup>298</sup> Saller, *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family*, 37, 41, 45.

<sup>299</sup> Saller, *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family*, 25, where the average additional life expectancy of women at age twenty is thirty-one years. According to the demographic study of Saller on ancient Rome, nearly half of the new born babies died before they attained the tenth birthday. Because of this high infancy mortality rate, a married woman bore 5 children on average. This makes the life expectancy of women relatively shorter than men. See Saller, *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family*, 42.

I beg you, restrain the unholy flames of your passion, and this crime which no barbarian land has ever committed: not even the Getae who wander nomadic on the plains, nor the unfriendly Taurians, or far-dispersed Scythians: send in exile from your mind this dreadful act, and keep it chaste, remember your mother, and fear unusual bedfellows. Do you intend to have both father and son in your bed, and let your tainted womb take an incestuous child? Do it! Overturn Nature with the fires of infamy (165–173)!<sup>300</sup>

As Seneca is contemporary with Paul, this play at least demonstrates that the romantic relation of a stepmother with her stepson is controversial in the cultural ethos of the time. Moreover, later in the story, the nurse was convinced by the genuine romantic love of Phaedra, changing her mind and aiding her to realise her love for her stepson. Why would such fires of romantic love of the stepmother towards her stepson be fanned in a popular contemporary play if the social ethos in Paul's time wholeheartedly condemned this specific kind of union?

Secondly, the "new women" movement in the first century is another crucial factor for understanding the social ethos. Ancient historians have highlighted the emergence of a new Roman women's culture in certain areas of the social life of Rome in 44 B.C., namely, "a woman in high position, who nevertheless claims for herself the indulgence in sexuality of a woman of pleasure."<sup>301</sup> As Roman Corinth was also rebuilt in 44 B.C. and a number of Roman elites moved into this city of Corinth so near to Rome, this social change in Rome may also have shaped the social ethos in Corinth.

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<sup>300</sup> "Phaedra" (*Six Tragedies* [trans. Emily Watson; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], 7.)

<sup>301</sup> Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 21.

The first social change regarding women was a significant social emancipation of Roman women between 100 B.C. and A.D. 200. They enjoyed a degree of political freedom in the public space which was remarkably different from the traditional Greek women's role and reflected a trend of rebellion against the social control of Augustus.

Another major characteristic was the sexual liberty and promiscuity of Roman women as promoted in poetry.<sup>302</sup> New women strove for the right for passionate love with whomever they wanted, even to the extent of breaking social conventions. For instance, adultery by women was glorified as a realisation of individual freedom in the pursuit of romantic love. This glorification of adultery by married woman is found in some of the elegies of Propertius. His poetry was written in 50 B.C. and became popular in the Graeco-Roman world in the time of Paul. He was well-educated and a member of the equestrian order but he was infatuated with Cynthia, an older married Roman woman. Here are descriptions of his romantic love with her:

You want to know why I keep on writing these poems of love, these sweets that melt in the mouth? It isn't Apollo or even Calliope prompting me what to set down, but my darling, my mistress who gives me these special homework assignments.... I watch when she fights against sleep and her delicate eyelids lower, and the poet in me awakes in celebration; *and when I behold her naked, and we struggle together naked, it's as if I had been there at Troy at the funeral games.* From whatever she's done and whatever she's said, I take my cue and try to transcribe what she creates from the void. (*Propertius* II.1.1-10)<sup>303</sup> [italics mine]

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<sup>302</sup> Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows*, 24-30.

<sup>303</sup> "The Elegies" (David R. Slavitt, *Propertius in Love: the Elegies* [London: University of California Press, 2002], 47). Cf. *The Elegies*, I.12.

Propertius seems to evaluate the ideals of romantic love as above social norms regarding adultery by women, and redefines honour and shame values. He romanticises the woman's infidelity and he is compelled to love her. A. W. Allen has rightly summarised Propertius' view of love: "love is a violent passion, a fault which destroys the reason and perverts the will, but a power which the lover is helpless to control and from which he can find no release."<sup>304</sup>

Besides Propertius' works, another influential contemporary writer Ovid argued from the history of Rome that it was "old-fashioned" for husbands to condemn the infidelity of their wives and open-minded husbands should also embrace sexual freedom for their wives.<sup>305</sup> The love poems of Ovid suggest that women's adultery is justified as a courageous woman seeking for romantic love, just as what men do:

While Menelaus was away, Helen, that she should not lie alone, was welcomed at night by the warm bosom of her guest. What folly was this, Menelaus? You went away alone; your wife and her guest were beneath the selfsame roof....In naught does Helen sin; in naught is that adulterer to blame: he does what you, what anyone would have done. By giving time and place you are compelling adultery; the woman has but used your own counsel. What could she do? Her husband is away; a guest, and no rustic one, is present; and she fears to sleep in an empty bed alone....Helen I absolve from blame: she used the opportunity a courteous lover gave. (Ovid, *Artis Amatoriae* 2.359-372 [Mozley, LCL])

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<sup>304</sup> A. W. Allen, "Elegy and the Classical Attitude towards Love: Propertius, I.1," *YCS* 11 (1950): 264; quoted from Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows*, 25.

<sup>305</sup> Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows*, 27-8. See also Philo's *De spec. leg.* 3.11, where Philo condemned people having sexual relation with their friends' wives. This may reflect how common adultery was in the Greco-Roman world.

In summary, while Roman law forbids adultery among Roman women, it is praised and honoured among the cultural mores. As the Corinthian Christians were familiar with this romantic ideal in society, it was possible for them to suspend their judgment against a woman seeking her own welfare by falling in love with a man that she loved, when her husband was now really “away” (deceased).<sup>306</sup>

The third major characteristic of this “new Roman women movement” is that the pursuit of romantic love is elevated over traditional moral norms. Based on the observation of the universalism of romantic love expressed in the elegies of Propertius, the object of romantic love seems to be even broader than what Bruce Winter has figured out. In particular, once you fall in love with somebody, even kinship relation does not stop it:

Men are all villains, faithless, and eager to seize on any attractive female no matter to whom she belongs. *The god who drives us is lacking in decency, honour, respect for the sacred laws of kinship* or even the bonds of friendship. We turn on each other in bitterest strife, no matter how close we’ve been...

Foolish? No one can judge who doesn’t feel such passion. I tremble in fears that I know are totally groundless. Still, you were drunk, which explains if it doesn’t excuse your vile behaviour that, this one time, I will pardon. But watch yourself, and know that I shall be watching also, now that you know how lucky I am in love. [italics mine]

(*Propertius* II.34a)<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> For other evidence showing these social changes of sexual mores of women promoted by male avant-garde, see Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows*, 27-30.

<sup>307</sup> “The Elegies” (David R. Slavitt, *Propertius in Love*, 127-8).



This poem reveals an ideology that one can even cross the boundary of kinship relation to love the forbidden one. The loved one can include one's stepmother.

#### **4.3.2 The Influence of Poetry and Plays on the Social Ethos**

These words may shed light on our understanding of the cultural values about a romantic relation of a son with his stepmother. Since the middle of the first century, theatres were found throughout the Roman world with performances open to all. The Roman empire had over one hundred "theatre days" a year to encourage people to watch plays mixed with choirs and music and theatres were common in the Roman world,<sup>308</sup> so theatregoing was a major entertainment of city people in ancient Rome.

Through repeated performances of well-known Roman plays like *Pheadra*, audiences may have wondered whether traditional moral norms against incestuous unions were a tragedy instead of bringing happiness to people. If they identified themselves with the aged nurse in the play, they would be challenged to follow the aged nurse in the plot to change their position to realise Pheadra's dream: falling in love with her stepson who did not share the same blood.

It should also be noted that reading poetry in the ancient Roman world was not confined to the school but was closely related to the recognition of social status: "It was a sign of status, and a further mark of prestige, to write literature and to be surrounded by authors and literary connoisseurs."<sup>309</sup> Thus rich people were patrons of poets, sponsoring them for public readings for which both poets and patrons would gain credibility and fame. Poetry recital was another major cultural activity of city people in ancient Rome and also took place in common social activities such as their communal dinner *cena*. During the dinner time, there

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<sup>308</sup> Mary T. Boatwright, Daniel J. Gargola and Richard J.A. Talbert, *The Romans: From Village to Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 381.

<sup>309</sup> Boatwright, Gargola and Talbert, *The Romans*, 340-1.

were many performances, including poetry readings. Like dancing and singing, poetry recital was deeply imbedded in the social life of ancient people in the Roman world.

From the above survey of social life of city people in Paul's time, we can conclude that the influence of play and poetry on the cultural ethos was far more prevalent in Paul's time than in the present time. They were significant leisure activities of people in the Graeco-Roman world and dominated the popular culture of their times. Just like pop-songs or movies in the present world, poetry and plays advocated a new trend that envisaged a kind of romantic love that crossed any traditional moral boundary.

### **4.3.3 Reasons for Boasting**

Although poetry does not indicate a historical event, it reveals the social ideals the people in general pursue. The case in 1 Cor 5:1 may correspond to the description in this elegy of Propertius: a romantic love against respect for the sacred laws of kinship. But if the Corinthian Christians listened to Propertius' elegies or Ovid's love poetry quite frequently in their social gatherings with families and friends in the *cena*, or watched the play *Phaedra* by Seneca in the theatre, where all include eulogies for passionate love, it was highly probable that they would be willing to show sympathy to the brother whose fault was just falling in love with a woman that the traditional moral norm forbade. They might think that this errant brother had no choice but was compelled by his passionate love.

On the other hand, the ideology of romantic love that was prevalent in the new women's social movement might depict the widow (the father's wife) as a courageous woman seeking for her own happiness by overcoming traditional sacred laws of kinship, while the stepson she fell in love with did not have any blood relation with her at all. This exaltation of romantic love in the social ethos of the first century may explain why there is an attitude of openness in

the culture towards various romantic relationships labelled as problematic by traditional values, including the incestuous union of this brother and stepmother.

Concerning the Roman law about marriage, it should be noted that it did not accurately reflect the actual values prevalent in the culture. That behaviour was forbidden by the marriage laws did not necessarily imply it was considered to be immoral. For instance, the Roman soldiers below the rank of centurion were forbidden to marry until their term of service was finished, a law effected in the first century until A.D. 197 when it was banned by Septimius Severus.<sup>310</sup> This forbiddance, however, had nothing to do with morality, but was most probably an attempt at controlling the *morale* of Roman soldiers. Roman law also forbade married women having extramarital affairs, but the above research on the works of Propertius and Ovid has shown how prevalent it was for upper class Roman women to have sex with men other than their living husbands, just as their husbands had sex with other women, and even with men or boys, in their day. Roman women in the upper class were “emancipated” for more individual freedom and attained similar social privileges as those of noble men.

Moreover, the date of enacting the adultery law is questionable, as Gardner remarks:

Augustus' *lex Julia de adulteriis* allegedly superseded several earlier laws on sexual offences, but our source for this statement belongs to the end of the second century A.D., and we have not other evidence for the number, nature and content of these earlier attempts to regulate the sexual behaviour of the Romans.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> Suzanne Dixon, *The Roman Family* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 92.

<sup>311</sup> Gardner, *Women in Roman Law & Society*, 123. Some ancient literatures, on the other hand, show that it was enacted probably in 17 B.C. See Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows*, 40.

Even though the law against adultery was enacted in Paul's time, the bad modelling by the family of Roman emperors in terms of sexual behaviour, and the unjust nature of Roman law concerning adultery, made people reject any moral values reflected in it. It was unjust because the adulterous relations of married women were condemned as illegal, while similar relations for married men were immune from comment. This further confirms the fact that a prevalent social ethos, at least among the upper social class, emphasised the freedom of having sex and stable romantic relations with any person to whom they were sexually attracted, rather than following the restrictions required by the Law.

In conclusion, people in general in Roman Corinth would have evaluated a romantic relation of a person with his stepmother as positive, and honoured it as an example of the realisation of the individual freedom to love. Whether such incestuous relationships were commonly found in the society or not does not affect my perception that people in that society would not condemn this specific romantic relationship.

#### **4.3.4 Implications for 1 Cor 5:1**

In the light of this historical picture, it is clear that there are numerous reasons for the Corinthian Christians even to "boast of" this endorsement because their social values were still aligned with the ancient popular culture on sexual freedom.<sup>312</sup> It also makes clear how awkwardly it would be perceived by the Corinthian audience when Paul unequivocally condemns this incestuous union as "sexual immorality." Based on the above study, it is clear

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<sup>312</sup> Justin J. Meggitt has argued that "interpreters of the Corinthian letters have most to benefit from those who have made the study of 'popular culture' their central preoccupation....The study of ancient popular culture...should have a central place in our deliberations." See Meggitt, "Sources: Use, Abuse, Neglect. The Importance of Ancient Popular Culture," in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church* (ed. Edward Adams & David G. Horrell; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 241-53. [pp.243, 253] I agree with his notion. My previous study has just demonstrated how important the study of ancient popular culture on sexual freedom is, for interpreting 1 Cor 5:1.

that the phrase “not even among Gentiles” (ἥτις οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν) in 5:1 does not mean “not even been heard of among Gentiles,” for they have heard a lot; nor does it mean “not even been tolerated among Gentiles,” for the outsiders (Gentiles) in general do tolerate this kind of romantic love. It is properly understood as “not even [been unanimously endorsed] among Gentiles.” Like non-Christian moral philosophers, Paul is taking a stance against the stream by appealing to different ancient traditions.

This result confirms John Barclay’s conclusion after comparing churches in Thessalonica and Corinth that “their religious ethos permits an *involvement in the church which does not entail significant social and moral realignment*.”<sup>313</sup> Paul does not address factionalism or division within the church, as Margaret Mary Mitchell suggests.<sup>314</sup> Paul does not share any overlapping consensus with the outside world either, as Horrell suggests.<sup>315</sup> The problem Paul addresses in 1 Cor 5 is “the infiltration of Corinthian social values into that city’s church”<sup>316</sup> and he takes a stance against it.

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<sup>313</sup> Barclay, “Thessalonica and Corinth,” 70.

<sup>314</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 111-6. See also May, ‘*The Body for the Lord*,’ 59, for his criticism against Mitchell’s notion of rhetoric of unity in 1 Cor 5:1.

<sup>315</sup> Horrell suggests that “we perceive Paul’s claim to be not so much that Christians live by *distinctive* ethical standards but rather that they live up to, and beyond, the ethical standards that others share but do not follow.” See David G. Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference: A Contemporary Reading of Paul’s Ethics* (London : T & T Clark International, 2005), 162. Horrell fails to take into account the positive evaluation towards incestuous union as pursuit for freedom of romantic love. This ethical laxity is not shared by Paul. Later we will see that Paul requires Christians in Corinth to live out distinctive ethical standards in their marital relations, sexual purity and social meals that are not shared by the outside world.

<sup>316</sup> Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, “The Structure and Argument of 1 Corinthians: A Biblical / Jewish Approach,” *NTS* 52 (2006): 205-18. [p.208] See n.14 in p.208 for their comprehensive survey of recent scholarship which suggest uncritical social assimilation as a key problem of the Corinthian church.

The backbone of his argument is ancient classic authoritative literature: the Scripture. The relationship between the rhetorical purpose of Paul's use of Scripture and the social values prevalent in Corinth is now investigated.

## 4.4 The Rhetorical Purposes of OT Allusions in 1 Cor 5

### 4.4.1 Not like the Outsiders

In Lev 18, as alluded to in 1 Cor 5:1, one sentence in the concluding section of Lev 18 is worth noting:

Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for in all these things the nations  
(*ἔθνη*) are defiled, which I drive out before you. (Lev 18:24)

The semantic meaning of the term “nations *ἔθνη*” here (and in Lev 18:28) is not denoting the racial boundaries but rather referring to those outside of the group boundary of believers.

For it later says that

<sup>26</sup> And you shall keep all my statutes and all my ordinances, and you shall do none of these abominations; neither the native, nor *the proselyte* (*προσήλυτος*) *that joins himself with you:*

<sup>27</sup> (for all these abominations the men of the land did who were before you, and the land was defiled,)

<sup>28</sup> and lest the land be aggrieved with you in your polluting it, as *it was aggrieved with the nations* (*ἔθνεσιν*) *before you.* [italics mine] (Lev 18:26-28)

Committing one of these immoral acts listed above would be punished by God like those outsiders who had lived in the land; even the non-Jewish proselyte (προσήλυτος) living among them should abstain from these practices, including having sex with one's stepmother, otherwise, they would be punished. Thus, the rhetorical purpose of the allusion to Lev 18:8 in 1 Cor 5:1 is to urge the Corinthians to be "not like the outsiders," warning them as Lev 18 warned the covenant people, against following the immoral behaviour of outsiders in the final destination of their wilderness journey.

While 5:1 echoes Lev 18 which calls God's people to differentiate themselves from the *outsiders in the final destination*, 5:6-8 echoes the great festival that calls them to separate from the *outsiders at the starting point* of their journey. The context of Exod 12:27 is alluded to in the phrase "Passover sacrificed" in 1 Cor 5:7:

<sup>26</sup> And it shall come to pass, if your sons say to you, what is this service?

<sup>27</sup> That you shall say to them, this Passover is a sacrifice (θυσία τὸ πασχα) to the Lord, as he defended the houses (οἴκους) of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, but delivered our houses (οἴκους). (Exod 12:26-27)

The blood of the paschal lamb at the first Passover functioned literally as a group boundary marker between the house of Israel and the Egyptians; the Lord himself struck down the outsider Egyptians but protected the children of Israel in their houses. In Exod 12:27, outsiders (Egyptians) were placed in the middle of the repeated word "houses" which symbolises the insiders, Israelites. It heightens the contrast between Israel (our houses) and the Egyptians and the boundary drawn between them is the Passover sacrifice (θυσία τὸ πασχα). This boundary function of Passover is adopted by Paul in 1 Cor 5:6-8, where the Passover symbolises a common experience of the audience that has marked them out from

where they come from, like the Israelites being marked, saved and differentiated from Egypt. Thus, the rhetorical function of the allusion to Exod 12 calls the Corinthians to be “not like the outsiders,” just as Exod 12 called the covenant people to mark themselves as God’s house and therefore avoiding the destiny of the destruction of outsiders (Egyptians) *at the starting point of their wilderness journey*.

#### **4.4.2 Abandoning an Embracing Attitude towards Sin**

Concerning the “leaven” metaphor, one dominant interpretation takes it as a symbol of the errant Christian in 5:1 or the incestuous sin he has committed.<sup>317</sup> Based on the “excommunication” reading of 1 Cor 5:5, that the errant Christian should be expelled from the community, the “leaven” was identified as the errant Christian. 5:6-8 was interpreted as a symbolic expression for the maintenance of holiness, purity or health of the church through ousting the errant Christian. Dale Martin’s notion of cleansing the body is representative: “Just as early Christian healers cured diseases by casting out demons and cleansing the body, so Paul demands that the Corinthians cleanse the body of Christ by expelling the source of pollution, the offending Christian.”<sup>318</sup>

However, there is an inconsistency with this interpretation. As I have argued in section 2.2.4.2, the various kinds of sinning brothers in 5:11 are still regarded as insiders against whom the whole church should execute social isolation. This subgroup defined in 5:11 includes the errant Christian in 5:1 because he is qualified as *πρόνος*, the first kind of sinning brother listed

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<sup>317</sup> Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 128; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 215; Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 1: 380-1; Rosner, *Paul, Scripture, and Ethics*, 85-6; Hosley, *1 Corinthians*, 80; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 208; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 179; May, *The Body for the Lord*, 68-70; Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, 50-1; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 241.

<sup>318</sup> Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 169.



in 5:11. Thus, he still remains inside the community which is inconsistent with Paul's imperative in the leaven metaphor—*cleanse out* the old leaven (5:7).

The discipline imposed on the errant brother in 5:5 also disproves the notion of identifying the leaven metaphor with the errant Christian. In chapter 3 of this study, I have pointed out that “handing one over to Satan” denotes the treatment of covenant-breaking insiders according to the tradition of the Dead Sea Scrolls, yet, he is still treated as an apostate insider, not an outsider. Thus, Paul does not depict a picture of purity maintenance by kicking out impure insiders through the leaven metaphor in 5:6-8 and he does not blame the errant Christian *per se* but the inaction of the church. He still presumes the errant Christian as well as those sinning brothers in 5:11 be kept *inside the church*. Thus this kind of purity theory of the Christian community—maintaining moral purity by removing immoral insiders—does not make sense here.

Most important of all, 5:6 states that “the leaven” is contagious in nature but it is difficult to qualify the immoral behaviour of the errant Christian in 5:1—incest—to be contagious. After all, how can it be possible that he or his incestuous behaviour influences other brothers to have affairs with their own stepmothers? Thus, *contra* Dale Martin, the offending Christian in 5:1 is not the source of pollution in the Christian community. If Paul intends the leaven imagery for the errant Christian or his behaviour, visiting prostitutes or extra-marital affairs would have been more appropriate examples of contagious behaviour stated in 5:6 rather than a stable incestuous union.

Finally, Paul's command in 5:7 is to “cleanse out the old leaven”, NOT “cleanse out the old leaven *among you*” NOR “*isolate* the old leaven.” It shows that the metaphor “old leaven” stands for some bad qualities *common* to the Corinthian Christians in general before

they were converted to Christ instead of evil works practised by *some* of them, qualities which should no longer exist once they were converted to Christ.

*I propose that the “old leaven” in 5:7-8 stands for the sin-embracing attitude of the audience before they converted to Christ.* Below is an OT allusion of the term “leaven”:

<sup>15</sup> Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and from the first day you shall utterly remove leaven (ζύμην) from your houses (οἰκῶν): whoever shall eat leaven (ζύμην), that soul shall be utterly destroyed from Israel, from the first day until the seventh day. (Exod 12:15)

The same noun “houses” appears again between the repeated word “leaven.” Its meaning is similar to this noun in Exod 12:17 expounded in the previous section 4.4.1, signifying the group boundary of Israel from Egypt. This “leaven” already existed in their “houses” before their celebration of the first Passover festival and stands for their past history in Egypt.

The historical significance of “leaven” to the first Exodus Israelites pointed out by Leslie Mitton is critical for our interpretation of the “old leaven”:

Leaven, however, was produced by keeping back a piece of the previous week’s dough, storing it in suitable conditions and adding juices which promoted the process of fermentation....If the piece of dough retained for leaven was itself infected or tainted, when mixed with the new baking of dough, it could pass on its poison to all the rest, and the following week’s leaven, already infected, would pass it on again in a continuing sequence, unless the entail could be effectively broken.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> Mitton, “New Wine in Old Wine Skins: IV. Leaven,” 339-40.

In other words, the leaven that the Israelites made in Egypt should also be destroyed in their first Passover festival or they themselves would be destroyed. The act of cleansing out the leaven signifies a radical break of the Israelites from their lives in Egypt. *While the blood of the Passover lamb marked them out from their surrounding outside world, the cleansing out of the leaven marks the Israelites out from their past history. It starts a new chapter of life for the houses of Israel.* Therefore, the old leaven stands for their past history in Egypt that should be abandoned in the Exodus.

Turning now to the context of 1 Cor 5: in light of the intertextual echo of “leaven” in Exod 12 and the historical significance to the first exodus Israelites, Paul’s rebuke in 5:1-5 does not address the errant Christian per se but rather the arrogant attitude of the whole church for their suspension of judgment against this sin. His introduction of leaven imagery in 5:6a (“your boasting is not good”) also addresses the boasting of the Corinthian church, not the sinning brother. Thus, the “old leaven” stands for the habitual nature of the lives of the Corinthian Christians before they converted to Christ, making them “proud of” this incestuous union (5:2, 6) and hindering the whole community from passing judgment on the errant Christian. Once this old habitual nature is cleansed out, they can become a new lump—the Christian community that will take action against a sinning brother (5:7).

Drawing these two together, the old habitual nature before their conversion to Christ (from OT allusion of “leaven”) and their boasting of not judging the errant brother, the meaning of the metaphor becomes apparent: *it is their old attitude of tolerance of sin, not the errant Christian, that Paul urges the whole church to cleanse.* This sin-embracing attitude should be rejected when they partake in the Passover meal established by Christ. Like the first exodus Israelites who should get rid of their old lives in Egypt, the Corinthian Christians should also bid farewell to their former casual attitude towards sexual sin prevalent in the

society. Paul then further describes these two lives metaphorically in 5:8: old pre-converted lives dominated by the social ethos, embracing malice and evil as contrasted with new lives in Christ embracing sincerity and truth.

This sin-embracing attitude is contagious because other sins listed in the ensuing context (5:11) would also likely be embraced. This contagious nature of a sin-embracing attitude had been noted by Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer:

Here the stress of the argument lies less in the evil example of the offender than in the fact that toleration of this conduct implies concurrence (Rom. i. 32) and debases the standard of moral judgment and instinct...The leaven that was infecting the Corinthian Church was a vitiated public opinion.<sup>320</sup>

Therefore, if there is any disease that threatens the health of the Corinthian body, the host is not the errant Christian or demons, as Dale Martin suggests.<sup>321</sup> Rather it is the prevalent social value in the society that numbs the Corinthians to sexual immorality. The symptom will be debasement or corrupt morality of the church to this incestuous union as well as other sins represented in the vice list in 5:11. Paul reminds them that as they are already healed (5:7c “as you really are unleavened”), they should live out their new healthy condition.<sup>322</sup>

Paul’s concern for the tolerance of immorality in the culture of Corinth is further confirmed by the observation of the historian G.D.R. Sanders:

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<sup>320</sup> Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, (2d ed.; ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clack, 1914), 101.

<sup>321</sup> Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 163-9.

<sup>322</sup> Cf. Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew : Paul and the Politics of Identity* (London: University of California Press, 1994), 96, who identifies the leaven imagery with the old attitude of pride of the Corinthian Christians rather than with the errant brother.

In the middle of the first century C.E., Corinth was a perfect place for the dissemination of goods and ideas—a multilingual, polytheistic, cosmopolitan community visited by travelers, merchants, and seamen from all over the Mediterranean. It is not difficult to imagine why the moral condition of commerce-oriented Corinth, its inhabitants, and visitors still concerned Paul deeply some two hundred years after the infamous cult of Aphrodite on Acrocorinth had closed its doors.<sup>323</sup>

This tolerance of immoral practice deeply imbedded in the culture of this commercial city of Corinth is what Paul’s “leaven” metaphor stands for and is what he expects the audience to cleanse out.

#### 4.4.3 Sins are Shameful

Paul’s allusion to Sirach in 5:11 strengthens his rhetoric of “shame” which alerts the church to their moral sensitivity. If the Corinthian Christians heard the echoes of the context of Ben Sirach, this message of shame would be understood more clearly. For instance, the shame list in Sir 41:16-27 is a discourse where the author instructs the readers about true shame and what they should be ashamed of. Then this is followed by the list of false shame: behaviours that they should not be ashamed of (Sir 42:1-8). The true shame list is strikingly parallel to the vice list Paul mentions in 1 Cor 5:11:

| LXX Sir 41:17-27  | 1 Cor 5:11            |
|---|-----------------------|
| 17 before your father or mother, be ashamed of sexual immorality... | Sexual immoral person |

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<sup>323</sup> G. D. R. Sanders, “Urban Corinth: An Introduction,” in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches* (ed. Daniel N. Schowalter & Steven J. Friesen; HTS 53; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 11-24. [p.15]

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 19 before the place where you inhabit, of stealing...   | Robber                                   |
| 21 of being ungracious when giving or receiving...  | Greedy person                            |
| 22 of gazing at a loose woman, of repulsing your<br>fellow-countryman,                        | Sexual immoral person,<br>reviler        |
| 23 of misappropriating another's portion or gift, of paying<br>court to another man's wife... | Greedy person, Sexual<br>immoral person, |
| 25 before friends, of saying reviling words   | Reviler                                  |

Besides idolater and drunkard, all other vices mentioned by Paul in 5:11 are categorised here in Sirach as acts that “you shall rightly avoid as shameful.” (Sir 41:27)

Thus, Paul uses the vice list as a literary sign to lead the audience to look into the Wisdom of Sirach and then notice this true shame list in Sir 41:17-27. As a result, this vice list becomes a shame list: sinning brothers should be treated by the Christian community in a shameful way. The immoral behaviours in 5:11 are properly related to six common social activities that the Corinthian Christians are often involved in their social lives before they were converted to Christ. These acts were probably not regarded as shameful in the outside world, but the social ethos of the Christianity community should evaluate them as shameful. As Paul shames these activities as sins which are backed up by Sirach—the textbook of moral instruction for God’s people—the Corinthian Christians understand these lifestyles as immoral and as endangering their own identity inside the church.

#### 4.4.4 Immediate Action Against Immoral Insiders

Finally, we come to the direct quotation of Deuteronomy in 1 Cor 5:13. If the “cleansing the leaven” metaphor does not designate the community expulsion of the errant Christian, why does Paul end 1 Cor 5 with this expulsion formula of Deuteronomy in 5:13 which explicitly refers to the errant insider? What does Paul intend with this intense tone?

John Paul Heil explains community expulsion in 5:13 as Hays, Rosner and many commentators do: “By ‘driving out (ἐξ) the evil one ‘from out’ (ἐξ) of their very midst (5:13b), the audience will place such persons in the realm of ‘those outside (τοὺς ἔξω)’ (5:12a, 13a), where it is God who will ultimately judge them.”<sup>324</sup> The key problem with this explanation is that it overlooks Paul’s rhetorical question in the preceding verse 5:12b: Is it not those who are inside that you are to judge (οὐχὶ τοὺς ἔσω ὑμεῖς κρίνετε)? He still regards these sinning brothers as insiders and because they are insiders, he urges the church to be responsible for making and executing judgment.<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> John Paul Heil, *The Rhetorical Role of Scripture in 1 Corinthians* (SBL 15; Boston: Leiden, 2005), 99. Rosner mainly bases his association of the six sins in 5:11 with the Deuteronomic community exclusion formula (e.g. Deut 17:7) and comes to this conclusion. See Rosner, “Deuteronomy in 1 and 2 Corinthians,” 122. Hays mainly bases his interpretation of the old leaven in 5:7 as referring to the errant Christian in 5:1 and relies on Deut 22:22-23:1 as the subtext of 1 Cor 5:13. Thus, 5:13 means the same instruction of Paul in 5:7 “cleanse out the old leaven” and comes to the conclusion of community expulsion. See Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination*, 21-24. I have argued against both interpretation theories in section 4.2 and 4.4.2 respectively. Many commentaries and monographs still interpret 5:13 as community exclusion against the errant Christian. See Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 227; Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 1: 394-6; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 220; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 191; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 245.

<sup>325</sup> To the best of my knowledge, only Alstair Scott May shares my observation and notices Paul’s different treatments of outsiders and those sinning brothers or apostates. However, he illogically classifies this particular group as outsiders: “Although numbered among the outsiders, the false-brother

This clarification of punishment as social ostracism of apostate insiders instead of community expulsion raises the question of why Paul quotes this apparent expulsion formula in Deuteronomy which does refer to expulsion of the evil person from the group and, in some cases, even to the death sentence.

I suggest that the rhetorical function of the quotation in 1 Cor 5:13b reaffirms the insider-outsider binary pair stated in 5:12-13a. Note the parallel of the sequence out-in-out between 5:12-13a and the quotation in 5:13b:

τί γάρ μοι τοὺς ἔξω κρίνειν; οὐχὶ τοὺς ἔσω ὑμεῖς κρίνετε; τοὺς δὲ ἔξω ὁ θεὸς κρίνει.

ἐξάρατε                      τὸν πονηρὸν                      ἐξ                      ὑμῶν αὐτῶν.

The double “out” (ἐξ) in the biblical quotation correspond to the double “out” (ἔξω) just mentioned in 5:12-13a, but the emphasis in this A-B-A pattern often lies in the middle: *Is it not those who are inside that you are to judge* in 5:12b and the *sexual immoral person* in 5:13b. By this repetition, Paul highlights that the object of judgment of the church should be confined to insiders: the errant Christian in 5:1 or other sinning brothers mentioned in 5:11. When the Corinthian Christians read again the various contexts with this quotation in Deuteronomy, the message of executing discipline against apostate insiders is apparent. According to Paul’s clarification in 5:9-10, they know the way of execution is social isolation, not community exclusion.

Therefore, there is a striking parallel between 5:9-11 and 5:12-13, showing the significance of the conjunction γάρ at the beginning of 5:12:

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is not simply treated as a ‘sinner or tax-collector’, but singled out for a particular type of social ostracism.” See May, *‘The Body for the Lord’*, 80.



5:9-10: previous letter “not to associate with immoral people” NOT referring to outsiders by

5:12a, 13a: making judgment :NOT referring to outsiders by

rhetoric of an impossible scenario: you may need to leave the world.

rhetoric of an impossible scenario: you may replace God’s role.

5:11a      rhetoric of shame against sinning insiders

5:12b      rhetorical question for making a statement: passing judgment upon insiders

5:11b: “not to even eat with them”: execute judgment to insiders (by social isolation, not community exclusion)

5:13b      “Drive out the immoral person out from your midst”: execute judgment to immoral insiders (by social isolation, not community exclusion)

In sum, the rhetorical purpose of quoting Deuteronomy in 5:13b is to *urge the Corinthian church* to take action against the immoral brother *immediately*. The action is social isolation of this person from all other insiders in the church, not expulsion from the community.

#### **4.4.5 Conclusion of 1 Cor 5**

The rhetorical purpose of Paul's echoes of Scripture in 1 Cor 5 is counter-cultural, and he appeals to those scriptures to remind the Corinthian Christians to stand against the social evaluations of the culture around them. He wants to form the social identity of the Christian community in a negative way: what the Christian community is NOT.... Paul's comment in 5:10 "not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since you would then need to go out of the world" is not exaggerated, but a fair assessment of the social ethos from the perspective of Scripture.

He appeals to various scriptures to urge a radical break of the church both from their surrounding environment (echo of "father's wife" and meaning of Passover festival) and their own past habit of a liberal attitude to immorality (leaven imagery). He appeals to Sirach to label certain immoral behaviours of insiders as shameful to reinforce the execution of judgment against sinning brothers. The final biblical quotation in 5:13b has a practical implication once insiders and outsiders are clearly differentiated. While it is not necessary for the Church of God to execute judgment against the sinning behaviour of outsiders, she is obliged to do it against sinning apostate insiders by social isolation and the execution should be done immediately. It shows the wisdom of Paul: facing the non-judging attitude of the Corinthian Christians (5:2), he does not overturn it wholesale but confines their attitude of tolerance to outsiders only.

#### **4.5 A Common Theme of 1 Cor 5 and 1 Cor 6-7:1: Insiders Judging Insiders**

In 1 Cor 6:1, Paul raises another real case in Corinth to illustrate further what he says in 5:12-13. He formulates another definition of insiders similar to 5:9-13: *the church*, not the outsiders, should execute judgment against insiders for immoral behaviour (in this case 6:3, 7,

defrauding the brother). Both the object (1 Cor 5) and subject (1 Cor 6) of the execution of judgment must be confined to insiders for immorality. The theme of insiders-judge-insiders explains well why Paul mentions this case of litigation here right after the case of incestuous union in 5:1.<sup>326</sup>

The purpose of highlighting the difference between the Christian community and society is apparent in 1 Cor 6 as well as in 1 Cor 5. In 6:1 Paul raises a rhetorical question: Someone dares...to judge before the unrighteous and not before the saints (Τολμᾷ τις...κρίνεσθαι ἐπὶ τῶν ἀδίκων καὶ οὐχὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀγίων)? The emphasis here shifts from the object of judgment (5:12-13) to the subject of who makes the judgment: it should be insiders that you should seek as judge to settle disputes (6:1). Paul stereotypes the outsiders judging this dispute in the Roman law court as unrighteous (v.1), those who have no standing in the church (v.4) and unbelievers (v.6), while the insiders of the church who are supposed to execute judgment on this issue are called “the saints,” (v.1) and “the wise” (v.5). This label “saints” may be deliberately used by Paul so that he can use it to recall the OT allusion in v.2 (see below). The labels for outsiders tend to be negative while the labels for insiders tend to be positive. In a word, outsiders are not qualified to pass judgment on this civil dispute between insiders of the church, only insiders are qualified to make sound and wise judgments.

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<sup>326</sup> Sean M. McDonough suggests that the quotation from Deut 17:7 in 5:13b functions as a literary link between 1 Cor 5 and 6, for Deut 17:2-7 is about casting out the covenant people from among them and then Deut 17:8ff about choosing the right people in Israel to settle lawsuits of the in-group. In his words, “it appears that *he has structured his entire discussion of this section of 1 Corinthians in the light of the text in Deuteronomy 17.*” See McDonough, “Competent to Judge,” 101. However, McDonough may be subject to over interpretation, for the evil mentioned in Deut 17:2-7 committed by the covenant people is idolatry and not sexual immorality. Thus, his claim about the parallel structure of Deut 17 and 1 Cor 5-6 does not stand.

## 4.6 OT Allusions in 1 Cor 6: Pentateuch and Daniel

It is widely recognised that 6:1-3 reflects Paul's inheritance of Jewish traditions.<sup>327</sup> The term "saints", "angels" and the rationale of "the saints will judge the world and angels" in 6:2-3 echo Dan 7:18, 22 or Wis 3:8, 4:16.<sup>328</sup> By the criterion of word agreement, Dan 7:22 corresponds to 1 Cor 6:2-3 with the terms "the saints" and "judge" as well as the overarching theme of saints judging the world with power endorsed by the Most High at the end times. Moreover, the verb "you appoint" (καθίζετε) in 1 Cor 6:4 also exists in Dan 7:26 and both refer to a secular judge against God. The "kingdom" language is prominent both in 1 Cor 6:9-11 and Dan 7. Therefore, all the three rhetorical questions "Do you not know that..." correspond to Dan 7 in terms of word agreement.

In terms of availability, Benjamin L. Gladd has shown that the use of the technical term "mystery" in 1 Cor 1-4, 13:2, 14:2 and 15:51 originates from the book of Daniel.<sup>329</sup> Therefore, it is not difficult for the Corinthian Christians to recognise the allusions to Dan 7 in 1 Cor 6 by Paul's question "do you not know that..." This concept "the saints will judge the world" is rare in Graeco-Roman literature but is a distinctive theme in Jewish apocalyptic literature. Therefore, it also satisfies the criterion of rarity.<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> Cf. L. Vischer, *Die Auslegungsgeschichte von 1 Kor 6:1-11: Rechtsverzicht und Schlichtung* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1955).

<sup>328</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 233; Hays, *First Corinthians*, 94; Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, 85; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 231-2; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 425; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 252. For the most comprehensive proposals of OT allusions of the judgment of the holy ones, see Garland, *1 Corinthians*, n.10 in p. 202. Ironically, Garland seems to be the only commentator making objections against allusions to Dan 7.

<sup>329</sup> Gladd, *Revealing the Mysterion: The Use of Mystery in Daniel and Second Temple Judaism with its Bearing on First Corinthians*.

<sup>330</sup> *Contra* Garland, who argues that "[b]ut in Dan 7:22 it is not clear whether the 'holy ones' refer to Israelites, angels, or glorified Israelites...and the scale of judgment envisioned is not so vast as to

1 Cor 6:5b echoes Deut 1:16. This fact is overlooked by many commentators but is incisively observed by Brian Rosner:

There are only three places in both literary and non literary Greek where (a form of) κρίνω plus ἀνὰ μέσον plus (a form of) ἀδελφός occur in that order: LXX Deuteronomy 1:16, 1 Corinthians 6:5 and Basil the Great's Commentary on Isaiah (102:9), where 1 Corinthians 6:5 is quoted. The Semitic flavour of the compound preposition ἀνὰ μέσον, a *hapax* in Paul's letters, reinforces the impression that 1 Corinthians 6:5b contains an echo of the LXX.<sup>331</sup>

In other words, it satisfies the criteria of word agreement and rarity. Concerning the question of availability to the Corinthian audience—whether Deut 1:16 is recognisable by the Corinthian audience in reading 1 Cor 6, it should be noted that 5:13b is a direct quotation of Deuteronomy from various places. As I have pointed out in section 4.4.4, the rhetoric of this quotation is to urge the Corinthian church to take immediate action to punish the errant insiders. Thus, it is reasonable for them to consult Deuteronomy for any further evidence of precedent cases in making internal judgments and it is the first chapter of Deuteronomy, not in the midst of it so it was easier for the Corinthian Christians to figure out the relevance between Paul's teaching "judgment between brothers" and Deut 1.

Finally, there is another vice list in 6:9-10. It is strikingly the same as the vice list in 5:11 with four additional sinners: μοιχοί, μαλακοί, ἀρσενοκοῖται and κλέπται (thieves). μοιχοί

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encompass the entire world. In 1 Enoch 1:9, the 'holy ones' are angels, not humans. In none of the traditions do the 'holy ones' make judicial decisions but instead administer God's judgment." See Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 202.

<sup>331</sup> Rosner, *Paul, Scripture, & Ethics*, 100-1.

(adulterers) exist in Sir 25:2 and κλέπται (thieves) in Deut 24:7, Sir 5:14 and 20:25. However, it does not satisfy the criteria of rarity, for both words are quite common in the OT but is rare in Graeco-Roman literature. Thus, we can say that Paul mentions these two vices from the Jewish tradition and does not necessarily refer to one particular book like Sirach.

On the other hand, the word ἀρσενοκοίτης and μαλακός are rare in the OT. ἀρσενοκοῖται is a combination of two nouns. These two words ἄρσην and κοίτη are directly related to the phrase ἄρσενος κοίτην in Lev 20:13 and the first and last word of the clause ἄρσενος οὐ κοιμηθήσῃ κοίτην in Lev 18:22.<sup>332</sup> Thus, this compound word is properly created by Paul, like another vice εἰδωλόλατραι (idolaters) preceding it in 6:9, according to his inherited Jewish tradition. Thus, it fulfils the criteria of word agreement and rarity. On the question of availability, I have argued that allusions to Lev 18 are already present in 1 Cor 5 by the phrase “father’s wife” as well as the issue of incestuous union. Thus, it is not difficult for the Corinthian audience to recognise the allusion of Lev 18:22 again when they read this new compound word “men-bed” created by Paul, so it passes the test of availability. The plural noun ἀρσενοκοῖται in 1 Cor 6:9 is properly translated as males committing same-sex intercourse without qualification, or simply practising male homosexuals.

Concerning the evil person μαλακός, it is not found as a connotation of vice in Scripture. It denotes various meanings in a non-moral sense.<sup>333</sup> However, the context of the vice list in 6:9-10 is helpful at least in two ways: a) it is a vice, its meaning is confined to certain sinful acts and b) it is listed with other sins.

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<sup>332</sup> David F. Wright, “Homosexuals or Prostitutes? The Meaning of ἀρσενοκοῖται (1 Cor. 6:9, 1 Tim. 1:10),” VC 38.2 (1984): 125-53. See also Wright, “Translating ΑΡΣΕΝΟΚΟΙΤΑΙ (1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10),” VC 41.4 (1987): 396-8.

<sup>333</sup> It exists only in Prov 25:15 and 26:22, where both are translated as literal meaning “soft” without any connection to any sinful act.

That this word *μαλακός* is connoted as sin/vice and in the context of listing various condemnable sins can only be found in Philo's *De spec. leg.* 3 (v.31, 39, 40).<sup>334</sup> It is expressed by a similar word *μαλακίας* which denotes the acts these people *μαλακοί* commit. It satisfies the criteria of word agreement and rarity—in the context of vice lists. *Μαλακίας* is mentioned in the context of Philo's interpretation of the sixth commandment of the Decalogue and Lev 18. Thus, it is still indirectly related to Scripture.

In v.31 and 39, *μαλακίας* is associated with unmanliness *ἀνανδρίας*. In v.30-1, it is an interpretation of Deut 24:3-6 about the sin of illicit remarriage—a man remarries his divorced wife:

30 Another commandment is that if a woman after parting from her husband for any cause whatever marries another and again becomes a widow...she must not return to her first husband but ally herself with any other rather than him....31 And if a man is willing to contract himself with such a woman, he must be saddled with a character for degeneracy (*μαλακίας*) and loss of manhood (*ἀνανδρίας*). He has eliminated from his soul the hatred of evil...and has lightly taken upon him the stamp of two heinous crimes, adultery and pandering. (Philo, *De spec. leg.* 3.30-31 [Colson, LCL])

There are two interesting points about *μαλακίας* here: a) *μαλακίας* refers to the illicit remarriage. This specific kind of adultery probably relates to a voluntary sexual union of a person with his ex-wife. Thus, *μαλακίας* does not connote coercive and exploitive acts here; b) it is improper to translate *μαλακίας* here as effeminate or feminine, although it is associated with loss of manhood. It is because it is a negative comment against the first husband who

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<sup>334</sup> Throughout the interpretation of the sixth and seventh commandments in the second table of the Decalogue, Philo mentioned various sins in *De spec. leg.* 3 such as immoderate gluttony (3.9), incests (3.22-25) and bestiality (3.48-50). Some vices are similar to the vice list in 1 Cor 6:9-10 and the sins mentioned in the surrounding context of 1 Cor 6, like incest with one's stepmother (3.20-21), adulterers (sexual intercourse with wives of friends in 3.11), drunkards (3.43) and visiting prostitutes (3.51).

marries his ex-wife again. There is no evidence in the context to indicate that he did it because he is feminine or effeminate. On the other hand, both meanings of the terms *μαλακίας* and *ἀνανδρίας* can be derived from the following clause “...eliminated from his soul the hatred of evil” and probably means loss of guilty conscience in committing sin.

In vv.39-40, Philo condemns pederasty (cf. 3.37). Contrary to popular understanding, the most striking observation is that the noun *μαλακίας* together with unmanliness *ἀνανδρίας* does not describe the boys or penetrated men, but those men who have sex with boys. *Philo condemns these boy-lovers as μαλακίας, not the boys:*

39 And the lover of such may be assured that he is subject to the same penalty. He pursues an unnatural pleasure and does his best to render cities desolate and uninhabited by destroying the means of procreation. Furthermore he sees no harm in becoming a tutor and instructor in the grievous vices of unmanliness (*ἀνανδρίας*) and effeminacy (*μαλακίας*) by prolonging the bloom of the young and emasculating the flower of their prime, which should rightly be trained to strength and robustness....40 The reason is, I think, to be found in the prizes awarded in many nations to licentiousness and effeminacy (*μαλακίας*)... (Philo, *De spec. leg.* 3.39-40 [Colson, LCL])

*μαλακίας* is therefore unlikely to refer to boys or womanish male prostitutes but *rather to the pederast, the active partner (man) who penetrates the boy*. Pederasty, according to Philo, is regarded as boasting behaviour in the social ethos:

....In former days the very mention of it was a great disgrace, but now *it is a matter of boasting not only to the active but to the passive partners*, who habituate themselves



to endure the disease of effemination....Furthermore he sees no harm in becoming a tutor and instructor in the grievous vices of unmanliness and effeminacy....The reason is, I think, to be found in the *prizes awarded in many nations to licentiousness and effeminacy*. (Philo, *De spec. leg.* 3.37, 39, 40 [Colson, LCL]) [italics mine]

Concerning the criterion of availability, whether the audience could figure out the meaning of *μαλακίας* in Philo's *De spec. leg.* 3, it is not as certain as the availability of the meaning of *ἀρσενοκοίτης* in Lev 18:22 and 20:13. However, as Philo of Alexandria had been appointed as the principal of the Jewish embassy to Rome in A.D. 39-40 and had made apologetic defence for the Diaspora Jews in Alexandria against the anti-Semitism of Gaius (Josephus' *Ant.* 18.259-60; cf. Philo's *Legat.* 1.239-354), he was probably well-known and respected among Diaspora Jews, in particular in Corinth where there were frequent commercial activities with Rome.<sup>335</sup> One well-known achievement of Philo was his re-interpretation of the Pentateuch in the language of Greek philosophy so that the Torah was made sensible even to non-Jews. In addition to the fact that Apollos, another influential leader and teacher in the Corinthian church, was a Hellenistic Jew who came from and was probably educated in Alexandria (Acts 18:24; 19:1), he had probably known Philo and had introduced his exegetical works to the Corinthian Christians. Therefore, it is reasonable for the audience to consult Philo's commentary on the Ten Commandments when they heard Paul's repeated echoes of the Pentateuch in 1 Cor 5, in particular echoes of Lev 18 in 1 Cor 5:1 and 6:9 (by the compound word *ἀρσενοκοῖται*).

In sum, the vice *μαλακός* indirectly evokes the sixth commandment and Lev 18. In the cultural ethos, people in the upper social class boasted of their sexual relations (*μαλακία*) with

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<sup>335</sup> Cf. Jenny Morris, "The Jewish Philosopher Philo," in Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People*, Vol. 3.2, 809-89 [pp.815-6] ; John M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora*, 158-63.

boys. In the list of various sins in *De spec. leg.* 3, *μαλακίας* is translated as “loss of guilty conscience to commit adultery” (3.31) or “boy-lovers” (3.39-40). As Paul has already mentioned adulterers right before *μαλακοὶ* and it is juxtaposed with males committing same sex intercourse, *μαλακοὶ* in 1 Cor 6:9 is probably translated as boy-lovers /pederasts in the context of 1 Cor 6:9.

There has been much debate about whether Paul condemns homosexual relations in 1 Cor 6:9. One focus of the debate lies in the meaning of these virtually new two words in the NT: *ἀρσενοκοίτης* and *μαλακός*.<sup>336</sup> Dale Martin argues against the translation of this word *ἀρσενοκοίτης* as a compound word derived from Lev 18:22 and 20:13. He argues that the semantic meaning of this word should be found in the contemporary text of Paul, like *Sib. Or.* 2:73. In *Sib. Or.* 2:73, this word is also mentioned in the context of a vice list which is mainly related to social injustice. Thus, Martin argues that the meaning of this word is related to economic exploitation through sexual means.<sup>337</sup> Concerning the meaning of *μαλακός*, Martin concludes from his word study of *malakos* in ancient Graeco-Roman literature that “[T]here is no question, then, about what *malakos* referred to in the ancient world. In moral contexts it always referred either obviously or obliquely to the feminine.... The meaning of the word is clear, even if too broad to be taken to refer to a single act or role. *Malakos* means ‘effeminate.’”<sup>338</sup>

It seems that Martin’s interpretation is questionable. Concerning his interpretation of *ἀρσενοκοίτης* :

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<sup>336</sup> For a comprehensive survey of this debate, see Thiselton, *The First Epistle to Corinthians*, 448-51; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 256-7.

<sup>337</sup> Dale B. Martin, “*Arsenokoitēs* and *Malakos*: Meanings and Consequences,” in *Biblical Ethics and Homosexuality: Listening to Scripture* (ed. R. L. Rawley; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 117-36. [pp.119-21]

<sup>338</sup> Martin, “*Arsenokoitēs* and *Malakos*,” 124-8. [p.128]

- a) Moral instructions in *Sib. Or.* 2 are not confined only to social justice but also include sexual purity, such as keeping virginal purity and guarding love among all in 2:65. They are unrelated to economic exploitation. Thus, the translation “practicing homosexuals” is not at odds with the context of *Sib. Or.* 2:73 ;
- b) Besides books 3 and 5, there is no certainty for the Jewish provenance of other books of Sibylline Oracles. Most scholars tend to regard the provenance of *Sib. Or.* 2 as Christian or Jewish work reworked by a Christian.<sup>339</sup> In other words, if there is any connection between *Sib. Or.* 2 and 1 Corinthians, it is a study about how 1 Cor influenced *Sib. Or.* 2, not the other way around;
- c) It is not uncommon for Paul to create new vocabulary by combining two words. Another new vocabulary εἰδωλόλατραι preceding it in 6:9 is also a compound word translated literally as idol-worshippers. Like ἀρσενοκοῖται, it is not found in the scriptures but the sin it conveys is apparent according to the Torah;
- d) The whole context of 1 Cor 5-6 resonates with OT echoes, in particular, the echo of Lev 18:8 in 1 Cor 5:1. It is thus reasonable to assume that Paul also recalls the same chapter Lev 18 (verse 22 as well as Lev 20:13) for moral instructions of the Corinthian Christians.

Concerning his interpretation of μαλακός as feminine or effeminate, Martin’s word study does not take into account the semantic meaning of *malakos* in Philo’s *De spec. leg.* 3.31-40,

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<sup>339</sup> John J. Collins, “Sibylline Oracles: A New Translation and Introduction,” in *OTP* 1: 317-472. [pp.322-3]; Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. -A.D. 135)*, vol. 3.1 (rev. and ed. by Geza Vermes, Martin Goodman and Fergus Millar; Edinburgh : T. & T. Clark, 1986), 645.

while *De. Spec. leg.* 3 bears the closest parallel context with 1 Cor 6:9-10: context of listing condemnable sinful acts.<sup>340</sup>

Finally, the only explicit biblical quotation in 1 Cor 6 is 6:16b: For, as it is written, “The two shall become one flesh.” It is a direct quotation from Gen 2:24.

The echoes of OT in 1 Cor 6—7:1 are summarised as follows:

6:2-3                      ¶ Dan 7:22

6:4 καθίζετε            ¶ Dan 7:26

6:5                        ¶ Deut 1:16

6:9 inherit the kingdom    ¶ Dan 7:14, 18, 27

6:9-10 four additional

vice + vice list in 5:11

ἀρσενικοῖται

¶ Lev 18:22 & 20:13 in form of compound word

μαλακοὶ

¶ Philo’s *De spec. leg.* 3.31-43 his explanation of the 6th

commandment “You shall not commit adultery” and Lev 18

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<sup>340</sup> This judgment is based on Martin’s word study of *malakos* in “*Arsenokoitēs* and *Malakos*,” 124-8 and his endnotes in pp.131-6.

## 4.7 The Social Context of 1 Cor 6: Civil Justice and Various Sexual Relations

I propose that Paul's negative adjective "unrighteous" for secular judges in 6:1 is understood in a literal sense: it refers to the unjust practice of these judges on civil disputes in the society. Bruce Winter has pointed out that it is common for judges to make partial judgments in Paul's time:

The edict of Augustus of 7-6 B.C. clearly shows that injustices were being perpetrated by the jury-courts in Cyrene....The emperor stated, 'I have learnt that innocent individuals have been oppressed in this way and have been consigned to the ultimate penalty'. Augustus' personal knowledge suggests the problem of corruption was not confined to Cyrene [*SEG* 9.8 ll. 11-12]...

In Egypt a former *exegetes* of the city of the Arsinoïtes was taken to court by a money lender who was charging forty-eight percent interest (double the current rate). A petition had originally been sent to the prefect of Egypt, who passed the case on to a judicial adviser so that it would be heard before a jury. The plaintiff then sent a further petition arguing that the jury would be open to the influence of a person of

more senior status and therefore could not act impartially [*P. Fouad* 26 (A.D. 157-59)].<sup>341</sup>

Besides the influence of bribery and unjust oppression in civil cases, one's social status was also entitled to legal privileges:

...as early as the Augustan period actions for fraud against certain types of people (fathers, patrons, magistrates, men of standing) were systematically refused when they were brought by certain other types (children, freedmen, private citizens, men of low rank, respectively). Those protected performed certain social or political functions—or were simply members of the higher orders.<sup>342</sup>

In other words, it was common for judges to make unjust judgments in civil disputes in the Graeco-Roman world under the influence of financial benefits and legal privileges entailed in one's social status. This social phenomenon of unjust judgment was reflected in the moral condemnation of Seneca the Younger against the integrity of the judge:

But where will you find such a fair judge? The same man who lusts only after another's wife and thinks the fact that she's another's wife is reason enough for loving her doesn't want his own wife looked at. The man who makes the sharpest demands on another's good faith is faithless himself. The man who chases down lies is himself a perjurer, the one who brings false charges is terrifically annoyed at being sued himself; the man who

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<sup>341</sup> Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 61. See Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 61-64 for other evidence of judges making partial judgment due to the influence of power and money in the Graeco-Roman world. It is particularly evident in the re-established colony Roman Corinth.

<sup>342</sup> Peter Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 184.

doesn't want his poor slaves' chastity assailed is profligate with his own. (Seneca, *Ira* 28.7)<sup>343</sup>

In spite of these unjust practices, judges or juries were still deemed honourable in their social status as they were Roman citizens, powerful and influential in the city. They were well-to-do, for "none having a census rating and property (if there is a sufficient number of men) of less than 7500 denarii." (*SEG* 9.8, A l. 18)<sup>344</sup> Moreover, they came from noble families and were recognised as honourable in the Roman world. Their partial judgments were considered excusable in a social world emphasising patron-client and family kin relationships. Donald Engels has pointed out a distinctive social value of Romans as opposed to Greeks: acknowledged inequality:

The Romans shared some of these values with the Greeks; but they never accepted democracy, because they never accepted equality. Nevertheless, the Greek aristocratic competition for honor found its analogue in the Roman world in the patron-client system. This was a system of acknowledged inequality, but, nevertheless, the patron was obligated to fulfill his responsibilities to his clients and promote their well-being. In exchange, the client gave his patron his political support and any other help he might require.<sup>345</sup>

If a dispute was related to family members whom jurors knew personally, or their patron's family members, it was conventional for the jurors to take the interests of their patrons or family members into consideration.

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<sup>343</sup> "On Anger" (Robert A. Kaster, *Seneca: Anger, Mercy, Revenge* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010], 54).

<sup>344</sup> Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 59.

<sup>345</sup> Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 87.

Therefore, like 5:1, the audience would find it awkward when Paul frankly criticised these honourable outsiders as unrighteous in 6:1. Paul's comment to the outsider judges in 6:1 is a further confirmation of 5:10: "not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave the world." 5:10 is not a rhetorical hyperbole but a realistic description of secular judges who are actually immoral and greedy. These honourable elites in the society should be evaluated by insiders as "those who have no standing in the church" (6:4) because of their unfair stance in making civil judgment.

Same-gender sexual relationships were generally accepted in the cultural ethos of the first century of the Graeco-Roman world, whether it was a stable romantic relation of two men or a promiscuous casual sex relation. Thomas K. Hubbard points out that homosexuality was regarded as a personal identity issue rather than casual sex for pleasure in the first century CE:

The coincidence of such severity on the part of moralistic writers with the flagrant and open display of every form of homosexual behaviour by Nero and other practitioners indicate a culture in which attitudes about this issue increasingly defined one's ideological and moral position. In other words, homosexuality in this era may have ceased to be merely another practice of personal pleasure and began to be viewed as an essential and central category of personal identity, exclusive and antithetical to heterosexual orientation.<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> Thomas K. Hubbard, ed., *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook of Basic Documents* (London: University of California Press, 2003), 386. For the ancient texts that demonstrate the embracing attitude in the cultural ethos towards various kinds of homosexual practice which includes a stable romantic relation of two adult men, see the quoted texts in Hubbard, ed., *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome*, 5-6.



There are some Stoic philosophers who condemned same-gender sexual relation as immoral, like Seneca's *Natural Questions* 1.16, *Moral Epistles* and Musonius Rufus's *On Sexual Matters*.<sup>347</sup> However, there is some literature as well as archaeological findings showing how prevalent this same-sex practice was in the Graeco-Roman culture. It included both pederasty and adult men's romantic relations and was not confined to only one specific kind of same-sex relation. The rationale was that some men were born with different sexual preferences, or were not able to be sexually attracted by women.<sup>348</sup> It should be noted that these justifications were applicable both to man-man and man-boy sexual relations (pederasty).

Concerning men visiting prostitutes, harlotry was regarded as a one-shot event for one's own gratification and did not entail any consequence for their relation with gods. In the ancient Graeco-Roman world, prostitution was a legitimate business; prostitutes were required to register with the aediles and pay tax from their revenue.<sup>349</sup> Prostitution was regarded as a normal business. They and their clients were protected by the law:

However, since sex was the prostitute's profession, she was able to engage with impunity in activities which would have rendered a "respectable" woman liable to prosecution. Sex with an unmarried prostitute, even though she was free and a citizen, was not *stuprum*....if she had carried on her trade after marriage, they were probably both exempt, she because she was a practicing prostitute, and he because it

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<sup>347</sup> See Hubbard, ed., *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome*, 392-5. Strictly speaking, Seneca's *Natural Questions* 1.16 is a condemnation of a man Hostius Quadra who committed bisexual intercourse, not homosexuality.

<sup>348</sup> Hubbard, ed., *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome*, 2-7.

<sup>349</sup> Jane F. Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society*, 132.

would scarcely be appropriate to charge with *lenocinium*, in the newer sense, someone who was already, as it were, professionally engaged in *lenocinium*.<sup>350</sup>

The only constraint was that prostitutes were forbidden to marry freeborn Romans.

Although some moral philosophers might condemn prostitution as being against the ideology of self-control, this business was vigorous and highly tolerated in the society. Even respectable citizens were willing to earn revenue by renting their properties as brothels.<sup>351</sup>

With regard to cultural values of honour and shame, visiting prostitutes by men was regarded as the sexual right of free men and was socially acceptable. It was even regarded as an affirmation of male identity and social standing of a free man in the society.<sup>352</sup> Besides going to brothels, a man might encounter prostitutes in his normal social intercourse. In private evening dinners (*Cena*), there were a number of entertainments provided for amusing the guests in the second stage of wine-drinking; besides singing, dancing and music, prostitutes were provided as part of the entertainment.<sup>353</sup> Sometimes the prostitutes even included young boys dressed like women (Dio Cassius, 62.6.4; Seneca, *Moral Epistle* 47, 7). The quality of the prostitute one received from the banquet reflected one's importance in the eyes of the host and one's private sex life did not affect one's reputation in public service.

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<sup>350</sup> Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society*, 133. There was even no official intervention against the sexual use of slaves for money until the end of the second century. The masters were seriously punished for compelling slaves to become prostitutes only after the empire was christianised. See Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society*, 221-2.

<sup>351</sup> Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society*, 133.

<sup>352</sup> Cf. Halvor Moxnes, "Body, Gender and Social Space: Dilemmas in Constructing Early Christian Identities," in *Identity Formation in the New Testament*, 163-181. [p.169]

<sup>353</sup> Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society*, 246; Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth*, 169.

Paul is standing against the stream again and takes his stance from Scripture against these social evaluations in 1 Cor 6.

#### **4.8. The Rhetorical Purposes of OT Allusions in 1 Cor 6-7:1**

##### **4.8.1 Impartial Justice in Making Judgments between Brothers**

From the outset, it is difficult to understand how the eschatological rights of saints echoed in Daniel 7 can be a justification for the practice of choosing insiders to judge disputes between brothers in 1 Cor 6:1-9a. According to Paul, some events that belong to the end times are not to be realised in the present situation. For instance, in the previous case in 1 Cor 5:9ff, Paul does not “cash out” the future rights of judging the world into the present and urge the believers to judge immoral outsiders; rather he clarifies his previous teaching “not to associate with immoral people” as confined to insiders. He now appeals to this eschatological promise for insiders to take the role of judges in internal civil disputes. Why does Paul not apply this eschatological argument in 1 Cor 5 but uses it in 1 Cor 6?

The theme of vindication of the law of God in the wider context of Dan 7 may shed light on our understanding of the rhetorical purpose of Paul in echoing Dan 7. This dream focuses on the final eternal messianic king bringing the reign of God to all peoples when all races and peoples will turn from the beast and worship the human figure in Daniel’s vision (7:14). However, before this end is realised, a king will rise up and speak words against the Most High and change the sacred seasons and the law (7:25). The One like a son of man (7:14) will come and take away the power of this anti-god king (7:26) and the saints will share the rule of His kingdom. It implies that the One will overthrow the rule of the anti-god king and restore the law of God in his eternal kingdom (7:27). Thus, the hope of this vision in Dan 7 is not only about identifying the holy ones who will share the reign over the world in the end time, it is

also a vindication of God's rule, the law, as a measure of judgment over the world. As the saints share the rule of the Most High, they are expected to judge according to his standards and measures. Paul's echoes of Dan 7 are then related to the hope for the restoration of the law of God as a standard for making judgments.

The law of Deut 1:16 echoed in 1 Cor 6:5 further confirms this rhetorical purpose and qualifies the nature of the law of God. When Moses chose wise and reputable leaders from each tribe, the instruction in Deut 1:16-17 is as follows:

*Give a fair hearing among your brothers, judge rightly among people, among citizen or among resident alien as well.*

You must not recognise face/show favouritism in judging: hear out the small and the great alike; you shall not hold back the face / be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God's... [italics mine]

When the Corinthian Christians hear the context of Deut 1:16 echoed in 1 Cor 6:5, the message they perceive is not only about proper people who pass judgment, but also the proper way of making judgments—with justice and impartiality.

While the society accepted the norm of making judgments according to a petitioner's social status, the OT texts that Paul appeals to emphasise the justice and fairness of the law in executing judgment regardless of status, whether blood brothers, fellow citizens or even a proselyte/ resident alien. *The emphasis on the manner of settling disputes between insiders of the church by insiders of the church, fairly and impartially*, seems to be the rhetorical purpose of Paul in evoking the context of Deut 1:16 in 1 Cor 6:5 as well as the eschatological hope of the restoration of judgment of the world by the law of God in Dan 7.

#### 4.8.2 Condemning Illicit Sex

The vice list in 6:9-10 is more counter-cultural by nature than the short list in 5:11. The compound word “man-bed” (ἄρσενοκοῖται) echoes the special law in Lev 18:22 and 20:13 which is a further elaboration of the Decalogue “You shall not commit adultery.” With reference to the word μαλακίας in Philo’s *De spec. Leg.*, which is a commentary on the same commandment “You shall not commit adultery” and Lev 18, it is evident that Paul is addressing various same-gender sexual relations in using these two terms.

Like speaking against incestuous unions, Paul uses inter-textual echoes of these two terms ἄρσενοκοῖται and μαλακοὶ to criticise the social evaluation of same-gender sexual relations (at least against male homosexual sex) as a sign of freedom for personal pleasure and of distinct personal identity. He evokes the ancient Torah through this self-invented compound word ἄρσενοκοῖται to condemn any kind of man-man sexual relationship, including voluntary stable romantic relations between two men. He evokes Philo’s *De Specialibus Legibus* (On the Special Law) through μαλακοὶ to condemn man-boy sexual relations. It probably evokes the memory of the audience about the sexual practices prevalent in the society, in particular among the lifestyle of the elites they looked up to. They were challenged and warned by Paul again that they should not be like outsiders who normalised or even boasted of these various forms of man-man / man-boy sexual relations. Paul also repeats his analogy of “Cleansing Out the Leaven” in 1 Cor 5: they should bid farewell to their own pre-converted lives for they were now washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of *our* God (1 Cor 6:11). The pronoun “our” (ἡμῶν) put at the end of the sentence 6:11 probably refer to both “Lord Jesus Christ” and “God” and it may further indictate Paul’s reminder of their identity as insiders.

Philo's ethical teachings on sexual morality in *De spec. leg.* 3.8-63 may be his response to the sexual laxity prevalent in the Hellenistic culture he belonged to in Roman Egypt.<sup>354</sup> Paul seems to give a comparable counter-cultural teaching here in 1 Cor 6:9-10 by appealing to similar texts in the OT. His message was understood by the audience to be a condemnation of the sex culture surrounding them in Roman Corinth.<sup>355</sup>

### 4.8.3 Abandoning an Embracing Attitude towards Casual Sex

Finally it comes to this direct quotation of Paul from the scripture: the two shall be one flesh. The rhetorical purpose of this quotation is closely related to our understanding of the whole paragraph 6:12-7:1. In chapter 1 of this thesis, I have raised questions about 6:18-20: why is sexual immorality so particular as the only sin described as "sin against" the body? Why does Paul not count the vice of the "drunkard" mentioned in 6:10 as a sin against one's body? The most important question concerning the whole paragraph 6:12-7:1 is: as Paul has already set out the principle of social ostracism against sexually immoral insiders in 5:11, why does he mention again the sin of having sex with prostitutes here? Isn't it clear in 5:11 as well as 6:9-11 to the Corinthian Christians that being united with prostitutes is unrighteous and such persons cannot inherit the kingdom of God?

*My contention is that Paul does not start another issue in 6:12 but continues to elaborate the theme of "insiders-judging-insiders." Paul further qualifies the requirement of a judge for*

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<sup>354</sup> Ronald Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic world: Philo* (Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian world, 200 BC to AD 200 vol. 1.2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 278.

<sup>355</sup> Another parallel of Philo and Paul is probably their criticism of a similar sophistic movement which emerged in Alexandria and Corinth. The sophists established their reputations only through declamation. See Bruce W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among the Sophists* (SNTSMS 96; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

*insiders' disputes and this requirement further elaborates in a constructive way the distinctiveness of the marital relations of insiders.*

First, concerning Paul's warnings in 6:12-20, it should be noted that these are applicable only to *insiders*—those who are members of Christ's body (6:15). Only those who have been united with Christ will face this danger. While the echoes of Dan 7 and Deut 1 emphasise the way of making judgment between insiders (fairness), Paul here emphasises the importance of preserving the identity of insiders for being a judge.

Secondly, the meaning of the "body" in this paragraph refers to the whole life of an insider, not just one's physical body. According to 6:13: τὸ δὲ σῶμα οὐ τῇ πορνείᾳ ἀλλὰ τῷ κυρίῳ, καὶ ὁ κύριος τῷ σώματι· [the body is not for sexual immorality but the Lord, and the Lord for the body], the two phrases "the body...is for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body" indicate that the semantic meaning of the word "body" refers to the whole life of a church member and not just one's physical part. An insider of the church is characterised by his or her whole life devoted to the Lord. With these observations, we can conclude that an insider is defined by one's *whole* life for the Lord (6:13) and one's *whole life* is cleaved (ὁ κολλώμενος) with the Lord (6:17).

The rhetorical purpose of the biblical quotation in 6:16b: "for it is said: the two shall be one flesh" is now analysed. This quotation lies in the middle of two kinds of "cleaving" (ὁ κολλώμενος) in 6:16 and 17, the first being illicit and sinful while the second good and spiritual. Although there are other spiritual meanings in the scriptures, "marriage of one man and one woman" is the primary picture envisaged in one's mind when the audience hears this quotation. It functions both as a rationale for the inseparableness of an insider with the prostitute after having sexual intercourse with her in 6:16 (first kind of cleaving) and also the existing spiritual union of an insider with the Lord Jesus Christ (second kind of cleaving),

both intended to be life-long unions. Then, in 6:18-20, Paul further points out that these two kinds of union cannot co-exist.

David E. Garland has given a reasonable explanation of the uniquely destructive power of sexual immorality and clarifies the meaning of “sin against the body” in 6:18. It responds to my question why other vices are not counted as “sin against the body”:

Commentators, however, have long asked how drunkenness, gluttony, suicide, and self-mutilation do not qualify also as sins against the body. But Paul is not referring to what might physically injure the body (Jewett 1971:261). To take one example, drunkenness does not have the capacity to make a person one flesh with alcohol. This one-flesh union is true only of the sex act. Because intercourse with a prostitute is “uniquely body joining, it is uniquely body-defiling”(Fisk 1996:558). In the context, sex with a prostitute severs the union with Christ and sabotages its resurrection destiny.<sup>356</sup>

In other words, sexual immorality is a sin against one’s whole life because of the long-term effect of union with prostitutes. This long-term union with prostitutes definitely contradicts one’s union with Christ which is supposed to be whole life commitment of the insider to the Lord. The issue Paul emphasises here is about the unique consequence of sexual sin to a Christian’s life. “Sin against the body” means a corruption of one’s whole life which results from the “unique body joining” entailed in sexual intercourse.

It is not necessary to imagine a libertine group inside the church with “all things are lawful for me” as their slogan and justification for their right to visit prostitutes. After all,

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<sup>356</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 238.



Paul does not give any hint of quotation in 6:12.<sup>357</sup> Be that as it may, it is more warranted to regard it as a shared value in the society of any city in the Graeco-Roman world which recognises the way of obtaining sensual enjoyment through the sex trade as legitimate and non-moral. However, it is unwarranted to deduce any implication concerning the sexual behaviour of the Corinthian Christians *after their conversion*. Thus, I consider it as untenable when Margaret Mary Mitchell states that “The section 6:12-20 explicitly deals with intercourse with prostitutes.”<sup>358</sup> It is a typical instance of unjustified mirror-reading. If there were really some Corinthian Christians that occasionally visited prostitutes, the disciplinary measures in 5:11 would have already been applicable to them. For a brother who visits a prostitute is already qualified to be a sexually immoral brother in 5:11 according to Scripture (cf. Deut 23:19; Prov 5; Sirah 9:6; 19:2). Moreover, a prostitute (πόρνη), the sexually immoral person (πόρνος) in the first vice list of 5:11 and the immoral person (πόρνοις) in 5:10 belong to the same word group, indicating the close relation of the sexually immoral person with the behaviour of visiting prostitutes in this discourse.

Therefore, Paul probably does not address a real case here, that certain brothers and sisters have been visiting prostitutes but is addressing the “leaven” of the church—their old embracing attitude to casual sex. Sexual intercourse with a prostitute has a long-term effect on the insider’s whole life and a possible lasting consequence is their loss of Christian identity:

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<sup>357</sup> I have rebuked this libertine theory in INTRODUCTION. See also Garland’s detailed rebuke against this libertine theory represented by Gordon Fee in Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 226-8. Margaret Mary Mitchell has compared the repeated phrase “all things are lawful for me” in 6:12 with Or. 34:12 to interpret 6:12 in the light of inter-city rivalries in Paul’s times. See Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 119. However, there is scant word agreement to establish the parallels. Moreover, Or. 34:12 explicitly states that the freedom phrase is a quotation from the party (someone will say...) but there is no hint of quotation here in 6:12.

<sup>358</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 119.

the destruction of “cleaving” with Christ. “Insiders-judge-insiders” is still the theme that Paul is trying to establish through the warnings of the loss of their identity in Christ. Moreover, it is useful for Paul to further elaborate positively about a basic requirement of insiders of the church in 1 Cor 7. The biblical quotation enhances Paul’s teaching on *licit* sexual relation of insiders which corresponds well with the second “cleaving with the Lord” in 6:17.<sup>359</sup>

Finally, the parallel pattern between 6:15-16a and 10:21 should also be noted. The unique and permanent nature of sexual union Paul establishes here in 1 Cor 6 becomes a logical ground for Paul to further illustrate the relation of eating idol food with union with Christ in 1 Cor 10. While both food and sexual pleasure connote one’s ground of boasting and social status in the world, Paul transforms it (with radical subversion) into a moral identity of insiders in the church.

#### **4.9 1 Cor 7:1 Summarises 1 Cor 5-6**

Before proceeding to the rhetorical analysis of the echoes of Scripture in 1 Cor 7:2-11:1 in the next chapter, I attempt to re-examine the place of 1 Cor 7:1 in the discourse of Paul. This clarification helps discover the continuous rhetorical flow of 1 Cor 6 and 1 Cor 7.

1 Cor 7:1 is Paul’s direct quotation of a previous letter he received from the Corinthians, as 1 Cor 7:1a says “...what *you wrote*.” This quotation is usually translated as “it is good for a man not to have sexual relation with a woman” or “it is good for a man not to marry a woman.”

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<sup>359</sup> See Eph 5:22-33 for another instance in the Pauline corpus for the parallel of human marriage and one’s union with the Lord. For the significance of the same biblical quotation Gen 2:24 in the interpretation of Eph 5:21-33, see J. Paul Sampley, *‘And the Two Shall Become One Flesh’: A Study of Traditions in Ephesians 5:21-33* (SNTSMS 16; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

As a result, 1 Cor 7 is either regarded as Paul's advocating of sexual asceticism, his rebuke against it or clarification of his previous teaching on sexual asceticism.<sup>360</sup>

This interpretation of 1 Cor 7 with sexual asceticism, however, does not stand. It results from a misinterpretation of the idiom "a man touches a woman." The verb "touch" (ἅπτω) in 1 Cor 7:1 is very common in the OT but it is rare when the object is solely a woman. It exists only in Gen 20:4, 6 (about Abimelech's intentions to have sex with Sarah), Ruth 2:9 (about Boaz' order to his servants not to take advantage of Ruth, which possibly includes sexual harassment in this context) and Proverbs 6:29 (about condemnation of a man sleeping with his neighbour's wife). Although all instances are in the context of sexual relations, "touching a woman" is always related to sexual sins condemned by Yahweh so it is more reasonable to translate it as "sexual harassment" or sexual sin. This metaphorical phrase "touch a woman" never refers to normal sexual intercourse of husband and wife. In other words, when a man "touches" a woman, she was probably not his wife.<sup>361</sup>

After a careful examination of the euphemism of the phrase "touching a woman" in the Greek classical texts, Second Temple Jewish literature and the LXX, Roy E. Ciampa comes to a conclusion similar to mine:

it is noteworthy that when 'touching' was used, it was not for sexual relationships in general, but for sexual relationships motivated by pleasure or passion instead of for procreation, marital friendship or some other rational grounds...the statement 'it is good for a man not to touch a woman' should not be taken as a rejection of sex in general, but more likely reflects a rejection of recreational or hedonistic sex, sex for pleasure or

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<sup>360</sup> See Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 247-51 for a systematic summary for the correlation of the understanding of 1 Cor 7:1 and the understanding of the rest of 1 Cor 7.

<sup>361</sup> There is one exception that the woman in the phrase "touch her (a woman)" refers to his wife: *T. Reu.* 3.15. It is about Reuben's confession of his incestuous union with his father's wife Bilhah. After knowing this, his father no longer "touched" her. For Bilhah is already unfaithful to Jacob. If Jacob keeps on having sex with her, the moral defilement of Bilhah will be transmitted to him and so he commits wrongdoings (*Num* 5:29-31). Therefore, "touch" here still refers to sexual sin defined by the Torah.

motivated by passion. The idiom might be best translated as ‘it is good for a man not to use a woman for sexual gratification’.<sup>362</sup>

Concerning the phrase *Περί δὲ* at the beginning of 1 Cor 7:1, it is too assumptive to take it as “a topic marker, a shorthand way of introducing the next topic of discussion, *the only requirement of which is that it is readily known to both author and reader*,”<sup>363</sup> as Margaret Mary Mitchell suggests.<sup>364</sup> Mitchell has rightly pointed out that *Περί δὲ* does not necessarily address any issue raised from the previous letter.<sup>365</sup> However, her own alternative proposal, as a marker of introducing a new topic, fails from a nuanced examination of the meaning of this phrase *Περί δὲ* in New Testament texts. Paul uses this phrase only in 1 Cor (7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12) and 1 Thess (4:9; 5:1). Although it can be taken as a sign of beginning a new topic totally different from the previous discourse (e.g. 1 Cor 8:1, 1 Cor 7:25 and 16:12 are at least two counter-examples. In 7:25, it may at most indicate Paul’s change of addressee. He continues teaching on the theme of “remaining as you are when you were called” begun in

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<sup>362</sup> Roy E. Ciampa, “Revisiting the Euphemism in 1 Corinthians 7.1,” *JSNT* 31.3 (2009): 325-338.[p.336] I have one minor disagreement with Ciampa about the scope of sexual sin this phrase refers to: it is not only confined to self-gratifying sex. For instance, in Prov 6:29 (touch a “married woman”) and Plato’s *Republic* 5.461a-b (touch a “young girl before the age of puberty”), “touching a woman” means having sexual/romantic relation with an unapproved female. In both cases, the female may be willing to develop a long-term romantic relation with the man. It just refers to a female unapproved by the Torah (married woman and so commits adultery) or by the ancient traditional moral norm of Greek moral philosophers (young girl and so commits illicit sex).

<sup>363</sup> Margaret Mary Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 191. (Cf p.235) It is a summary of her previous article: Mitchell, “Concerning *Περί δὲ* in 1 Corinthians,” *NovT* 31.3 (1989): 229-56.

<sup>364</sup> This notion has been adopted by many commentators: Thiselton, *The First Epistle to Corinthians*, 483; Craig Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, 62; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 277. David Garland takes *Περί δὲ* in 7:1 as a formula for “introducing a direct quotation or paraphrase from the Corinthians’ letter that serves as a subject heading for the section: sexual asceticism and marriage.” See Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 249.

<sup>365</sup> Mitchell, “Concerning *Περί δὲ* in 1 Corinthians,” 236-50.

7:17 to the virgins: remain in the social status (=marital status for virgins) when they were called, as 7:26b explicitly states. It may be regarded as starting a new paragraph but it is difficult to take it as starting a discussion on another topic. In 16:12, it is more difficult to regard *Περὶ δὲ* as the sign for a new paragraph. In 16:5-12, Paul tells the Corinthians his own future travel plan as well as that of his co-workers. He just changes the co-worker he mentions from Timothy in v.11 to Apollo in v.12. He starts a new topic at 16:13, *not* 16:12.<sup>366</sup> In 1 Thess 5:1, Paul continues with his previous teaching of 1 Thess 4:13-18 about the second coming of the Lord but focuses more on the unpredictability of the timing of His coming. It cannot be regarded as a literary sign of starting a different topic, either. Mitchell's notion of *Περὶ δὲ* as a topic marker also does not hold in many other New Testament texts.<sup>367</sup>

Based on the above examination, the literary function of *Περὶ δὲ* varies in different contexts. It does not necessarily signal the start of another new topic or paragraph. In addition to my above clarification of the meaning of the idiom "touch a woman" as committing

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<sup>366</sup> See Collins, *First Corinthians*, 594 who argues for the unity of 6:10-12 by pointing out common topics shared by 6:10-11 and v.12.

<sup>367</sup> In the non-Pauline literature of New Testament, the phrase *Περὶ δὲ* exists *in the midst* of a narrative (Matt 27:46) or *in the midst* of sayings of somebody (Jesus : Matt 20:6; 22:31; 24:36; Mark 12:26; 13:32; John 16:11; James and elders in Jerusalem: Acts 21:25). In all cases, *Περὶ δὲ* does not signify a start of another new topic of discussion. In some cases, like Matt 20:6, it functions even like a sign indicating the continuous flow of the story. Mitchell contends that "In Acts 21:25 the phrase...introduces a new topic after the speakers have focused on the Jews who have believed (21:20)." See Mitchell, "Concerning *Περὶ δὲ* in 1 Corinthians," 251. However, from the context of the speech of James and the elders, Acts 21:25 can at most be regarded as changing the addressee from Jewish believers to Gentile believers. The topic still continues on the issue of respecting Moses by the Christian community. The conversation remains focused on the issue of responding to the Jewish charge against the Christian community disrespecting the Mosaic Law. For apparent counter-examples against Mitchell's notion *Περὶ δὲ* as a new topic marker (e.g. Matt 20:6 and 27:46), Mitchell has not addressed them nor given any explanation. Thus, Mitchell's notion of new topic marker is at least *inconclusive* in the New Testament texts.

sexual sin with a woman, *it is reasonable to regard 7:1b as a summary statement of Paul's previous teachings of 1 Cor 5-6 instead of the beginning of another paragraph.* This quotation from the previous letter of Corinthians written to Paul strengthens his own teachings against sexual immorality: no illicit sex in terms of both wrong purpose (self-gratifying casual sex with prostitutes) and wrong person (one's stepmother). It shows the wisdom of Paul again: he summarises his message by a smart use of the Corinthians' own words.

In conclusion, 7:1 is like a point of inflexion: it summarizes the preceding discourse and links it up with the ensuing text as a point of development. 1 Cor 7:1-2 is translated as follows, where *Περὶ δὲ* connotes a similar meaning as in 1 Cor 16:12 or Matt 20:6 :

....For you were bought with price; therefore, you should glorify God in your whole life, 7:1 and as (*Περὶ δὲ*) what you have written: "it is good for a man not to commit sexual sin with a woman."

7:2 In order to [avoid] sexual immorality [mentioned above], each *ἕκαστος* [male] should have his own wife and each *ἐκάστη* [female] her own husband....

## Excursus 4      Are the Echoes of OT Recognisable?      Responses to William Harris' Thesis of Low Literacy Rate

Some scholars have raised questions against Hays' approach of echoes of Scripture. They have argued that the real audience is not able to grasp the broader contexts of the OT texts when Paul quotes a particular verse and is not able to recognise the implicit alluded OT texts. I call this criticism "ancient audience criticism" and it is best represented by Christopher M. Tuckett and Christopher D. Stanley.

Tuckett raises this question mainly from his criticisms of Rosner's notion that Paul is indebted to the Jewish scripture when giving moral instructions to the gentile Christians in Corinth.<sup>368</sup> Christopher Stanley's argument is based on William Harris' conclusion about the low rate of literacy of people in the Roman Empire in the first century<sup>369</sup> and he challenges the "inter-textual echoes of Scripture" approach of Richard Hays to interpreting Pauline texts: if most of the Gentile converts were illiterate, how could they figure out the broader context of the cited Scriptural verse?<sup>370</sup> They both assert that the Corinthian audiences were mainly

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<sup>368</sup> Christopher M. Tuckett, "Paul, Scripture and Ethics. Some Reflections," *NTS* 46.3 (2000): 403-24. In the latter part of the paper, Tuckett has also mentioned his disagreement against echoes of the wider contexts of oracle in Jeremiah 9 in 1 Cor 1:31 suggested by various scholars, including Richard Hays. See n.53 in p.417. However, Tuckett does not directly engage with Hays' arguments in detail.

<sup>369</sup> William Harris concludes that the average rate of literacy in the Roman Empire in the first century was about 15-20%. See William Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 328. However, Harris' definition of literacy is the ability of both reading and writing Greek, not just reading ability. For those who can read simple sentences but write slowly or are not able to write, Harris calls them semi-literate, and illiterate for those who cannot write and read. See William Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 4-7.

<sup>370</sup> Christopher D. Stanley, "Paul's 'Use' of Scripture: Why the Audience Matters," in *As It is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture*, 125-55. See also his rebuke against assumption #3 in his book *Arguing with Scripture: The Rhetoric of Quotations in the Letters of Paul* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 43-6.

hearers rather than readers of the written text. Someone read the letter aloud; the majority of the church members just listened and did not read the texts and they were not as familiar with the scriptures as Paul. Therefore, it is unlikely that the hearers could figure out the echoes of Scripture scholars propose from the original OT context quoted in 1 Corinthians, even though Paul intends them to do this.<sup>371</sup>

Although he challenges Richard Hays' interpretation through inter-textual echoes, Stanley actually raises the same question Hays has stated as the fifth test of determining the echoes. It is the criterion of historical plausibility: "Could his readers have understood it?"<sup>372</sup> Rhetorical analysis involves the situation of the audience. If it is argued that Paul sought to persuade the Corinthian Christians for behavioural change, one necessary condition is that the audience at least should be able to understand the point Paul intends to make in quoting or echoing the scripture/ scriptures. In other words, the audience is not "deaf" to the echoes.

On the other hand, another question that should be raised about biblical literacy is about the attitude of people towards Scripture. For example, while the literacy rate is extremely high, biblical literacy in England at present is far lower than 15%.<sup>373</sup> Incentive for reading the Bible is the key; if people find it sacred, reading it as a matter of life and death, or at least regard it as classic literature *worthy* of spending time on to generate conversation, biblical literacy will rise. This key factor in Bible literacy can be termed "provoking reading urgency."

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<sup>371</sup> Tuckett, "Paul, Scripture and Ethics. Some Reflections," 411-12; Stanley, "Paul's 'Use' of Scripture: Why the Audience Matters," 127.

<sup>372</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 30.

<sup>373</sup> According to a survey of 900 people in UK from faith and non-faith background taken in 2009, less than 5% of the people are able to name all of the Ten Commandments. See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/wear/8146460.stm>.



If people lack any kind of reading urgency and find the Bible irrelevant,<sup>374</sup> it is unrealistic to expect high biblical literacy rates even in a well-educated population. This may be a marked difference between modern British readers and first century Christians.

## **Literacy Rate Varied between Places in the Roman Empire**

There is evidence to show that the majority of the Corinthian church was able to grasp the OT echoes/allusions. First, Harris admits that the degree of literacy rate is highly dependent on location and gender with people in cities and men in general attaining far higher literacy rates than people in rural areas and women.<sup>375</sup> The average literacy rate of 15-20% was not equally distributed. Harris also admits that the city of Pompeii attained higher literacy rates than some other Italian towns and much higher than places in the western provinces.<sup>376</sup> Thus, the average literacy rate may not reflect the rate in the city of Corinth.

Secondly, Harris' definition of literacy includes both reading and writing ability of Greek. However, the necessary condition for the audience to be able to identify the echoes of the scriptures is just semi-literate ability so that they are able to read and understand both Scripture and the manuscript of Paul's letter. Thus, according to Harris' findings that the semi-literacy rate of Roman soldiers was 34%,<sup>377</sup> it is reasonable to assume that the semi-literacy rate in Corinth was higher than 20%.

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<sup>374</sup> This is exactly one of the comments of the interviewees in the Bible survey reported at the link above.

<sup>375</sup> William Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 252-3, 329-30.

<sup>376</sup> William Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 330.

<sup>377</sup> William Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 254.

## Literacy Rate Depends on the Incentive

Literacy rate depends mainly on the incentive to learn to read and an important argument for Harris' conclusion of low average literacy rate is the lack of incentive. Because of the fixed social-political hierarchy, receiving an education did not enable one to move up the social ladder or handle daily business,<sup>378</sup> so there was no urgency in their daily lives to motivate people to learn to read and write Greek. On the other hand, a social group which found a reading and writing capability practical for their lives, such as social elites, soldiers and people living in a city like Teos with a tradition of educational philanthropy, Harris suggests these people groups would attain a higher literacy rate. The highest rate was 40% among free-born men in Teos.<sup>379</sup>

Based on Harris' reasoning, I argue that Corinthian people attained a higher rate of semi-literacy than the average concluded by Harris because there was a high provoking reading urgency in their urban social lives.

The history of Roman Corinth is an important starting point. It was re-established with a highly literate or semi-literate population, and when it was rebuilt as a colony of the Roman Empire in 44 B.C., the majority of immigrants were of elites, freedman and veterans sent out from Rome (Strabo, *Geography*, 8.6.23).<sup>380</sup> According to Harris' study, soldiers, and this included veterans, had finished primary education and had strong motivation to write and

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<sup>378</sup> William Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 33-35, 176.

<sup>379</sup> The estimated semi-literate rate by William Harris for legionary soldiers is 34%. See Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 254, 329.

<sup>380</sup> See Nancy Bookidis, "Religion in Corinth: 146 B.C.E to 100 C.E.," in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth*, 141-64.[p.163] Cf. Donald Engels, *Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 16.

read letters to their families. The other two categories were educated and so most of them were able to read Greek.

Secondly, temple worship, magical spells and curses were common practices in Roman Corinth. Harris has given a list of functions of literacy in the Graeco-Roman world which includes dedicating something to a god, publicising a religious calendar, recording prayers, circulating prophecies, recording a magical spell, cursing someone and transmitting a sacred story.<sup>381</sup> All these purposes of writing were regular religious activities of the Corinthian citizens. In particular, cursing with Greek magical spells was a common practice. David Raymond Smith has shown that Greek *defixio* cursing was a common practice of ordinary people in Paul's time<sup>382</sup> and one should be able to understand at least the name of the cursed together with the curses he intended to bestow in written letters. Such cursing practice against enemies was a strong motivation for them to learn to read Greek at least at the elementary level of recognising meanings of nouns and simple sentences.

Thirdly, classic Greek books were accessible to the masses in Corinth and there was a large library in the centre of the city. There was probably also a lively book trade operating in the city.<sup>383</sup> From the giant size of the building of the library and its location next to central shops, it was probably a city public library accessible by the masses, rather than a private library exclusively serving the rich and elites.<sup>384</sup> As most libraries in the Graeco-Roman world held Greek classic works, and the Septuagint was already regarded as a classic Greek book

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<sup>381</sup> Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 12.

<sup>382</sup> Smith, *'Hand This Man Over to Satan'*, 76-82, 113.

<sup>383</sup> Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 45.

<sup>384</sup> See the location mark 2 of the Forum area in Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 152.

collected in Roman libraries in Alexandria,<sup>385</sup> the Corinthians were probably able to access the Septuagint in this public library.

Fourthly, Roman Corinth was an important administrative Greek city in the Roman Empire. It was the capital of the province of Achaia and the empire-wide Isthmian games were held here biannually. Fluid communication and efficient handling of legal documents for routine administration and organisation of this great nation-wide event created a pressing need for people in Corinth to learn to read Greek, for many people were involved in commercial and administrative work. In addition, the proximity to Athens and the evidence of numerous written Greek papyri discovered in the Greek peninsula in the first and second century,<sup>386</sup> make it reasonable to conclude that Corinthian people attained a higher literacy rate than other places in the Roman world.

In summary, from the social context of Roman Corinth, there was strong motivation for people in Corinth to learn Greek. They would find it useful as the opportunity for reading Greek permeated their public life: in family education, in work, cultic worship or civic participation. According to Harris' own estimate that chiefly depends on incentives in social lives, the semi-literacy rate of Corinthian citizens in general was higher than the literacy rate of freeborn men in Teos, i.e. higher than 40%.<sup>387</sup>

### **Incentive of Reading Scripture among the Audience of 1 Corinthians**

With this historical picture in mind, an assessment of the scriptural semi-literacy rate of Corinthian church is attempted.

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<sup>385</sup> Lionel Casson, *Libraries in the Ancient World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 35.

<sup>386</sup> Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 283.

<sup>387</sup> Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 329.

First, most audiences had been involved in idol worship or even practised the magic of cursing before they converted to Christ (1 Cor 8:7; 12:2-3). Therefore they were mostly literate or at least semi-literate.<sup>388</sup> Secondly, the Corinthian church was founded first in the Jewish synagogue where Paul preached the gospel and reasoned, persuading the Jews and Gentiles there (cf. Acts 18:4). As a result, one of the earliest converts was the keeper of the Jewish synagogue Crispus and his household (Acts 18:8), so the first converts were Diaspora Jews who were familiar with Scripture. Moreover, Paul stayed there for eighteen months to teach them Scripture as well as the teachings of Jesus. Although it does not imply systematic learning, this period is sufficient for Paul to have taught them some basic life principles from OT stories and commandments for forming moral behaviour and convictions for an ordinary Christian. They might have met more than once a week in the church to receive Paul's teaching over those eighteen months. Scripture was available in the synagogue, and the public library of the city.

Most important of all, there was strong urgency for them to read Scripture as it was a sacred book. Christopher Stanley also suggests that the audience respected Scripture as the Word of God and revered the God of Israel.<sup>389</sup> No matter how rebellious and blameworthy they were, they regarded Scripture as sacred and authoritative, and this became a strong motivation for them to read this sacred book for a fuller understanding of the gospel of Christ in which they had believed. Even though they were not very teachable students and were probably rebellious against Paul, their knowledge of Scripture could be a powerful means for them to challenge the teaching authority of Paul.

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<sup>388</sup> The charge of mirror-reading does not stand as a historical picture of the social world of Corinth has been set up well.

<sup>389</sup> Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture*, 83.

When we consider these four elements together: their high ability of reading Greek, strong motivation for reading Scripture, the availability of the Septuagint and their religious education from the intensive biblical teaching of Paul which included biblical literacy training for eighteen months, it is reasonable to assume that the Corinthian church members attained a biblical semi-literacy rate equal or higher than the rate in the social world of Corinth. Thus, it is not unrealistic to estimate a semi-literacy rate of more than 50%, compared with the 40% of freeborn men in Teos.<sup>390</sup>

Tuckett has claimed that “All this means that in, say, Pauline communities, virtually all ‘literature’, be it Paul’s own letters or Jewish scripture, would have been available to most members of the community in oral form: they would have heard it, rather than read it.”<sup>391</sup> According to the above socio-historical analysis, however, his claim is only partially true. They were able to hear *and* read 1 Corinthians and Scripture as well. The Corinthian church may have heard Paul’s letter orally the first time but afterwards, they were likely to read it, copy it and circulate it in written form and then carefully investigate their authoritative sacred Scripture for confirmation.

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<sup>390</sup> Christopher Stanley has claimed that “[W]e have no reason to think that Paul’s churches were any exception to his rule [not more than 10% literacy rate].” See Stanley, *Arguing with Scripture*, 45. Yet I have demonstrated numerous reasons here to show that Stanley has underestimated the reading ability of the Corinthian audience.

<sup>391</sup> Tuckett, “Paul, Scripture and Ethics. Some Reflections,” 407.

# Chapter 5

## Echoes of Scripture and Identity Formation in 1 Cor 5-11:1 PART 2

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In this chapter, I will continue to explore the rhetorical purposes of echoes of Scripture in 1 Cor 7:2—11:1.

There are no direct OT allusions found in 1 Cor 7. As mentioned in chapter 4, 7:2-9 is Paul's ongoing exposition of the biblical quotation of Gen 2:24 begun in 1 Cor 6:16.

Therefore, I will not discuss the process of identifying OT allusions in 1 Cor 7 and will go directly into Paul's rhetorical expansion of Gen 2:24 in 1 Cor 7:2-9 with reference to his new definition of marriage. Problems of interpretation arise in the light of the social understanding of marriage in the Graeco-roman world. Seen from the perspective of the original readers, especially the neophytes in the Corinthian church, a key question naturally arises: how can marital relations stop one from committing sexual immorality?

In 1 Cor 8-11:1, I will first identify the OT allusions, then the social context relating to 1 Cor 8-11:1 and finally Paul's rhetorical purpose in echoing the scriptures.

### 5.1 The Social Context of 1 Cor 7:2-16

#### 5.1.1 Sexually Open and Temporal Marriage

Below is the definition of marriage in Paul's social world:

If two Roman citizens with the legal capacity to marry one another each had the consent of the *paterfamilias* and lived together with the intention of being married, that was recognized as a valid marriage (*iustum conubium* or *iustae nuptiae*), and

children born of the union were Roman citizens in the power of their father. This gives us a basic definition of marriage and a notion of its purpose in Roman society.<sup>392</sup>

From the outset, this definition is similar to the concept of marriage in the modern western world, defined as monogamy and exogamy, as the “legal capacity” includes the restraint that the husband and wife should not come from the same kinship family.

Yet, there were a number of differences in their concept of marriage from the present western world. First, marriage required the consent of the head of family of the husband and wife rather than being merely the individual decisions of the two persons. Their *paterfamilias* was involved at a very early stage of their romantic relationship instead of being informed of marriage by the couple in the final stage. Matchmaking by parents for marriage was more common than making one’s own choice after courtship. Same-sex marriage was not legally recognised in any part of the Roman world.

Secondly, there were two common understandings of marital relationships in the first century Roman world that are very different from the present and are relevant to our understanding of 1 Cor 7: *the marriage remained sexually open and was seen as temporal*.

It was commonly understood that husband and wife could still have sex with other people, without it being regarded as infidelity or betrayal. The fact that a married man could still have casual sex with other women was reflected in the teaching of the moral philosopher Plutarch:

When Persian kings dine, their legal wives sit beside them and share the feast. But if they want to amuse themselves or get drunk, they send their wives away, and

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<sup>392</sup> Suzanne Dixon, *The Roman Family*, 61.



summon the singing-girls and the concubines. And they are quite right not to share their drunken orgies with their wives. So, if a private citizen, intemperate and tasteless in his pleasures, commits an offense with a mistress or a maidservant, *his wife ought not to be angry or annoyed*, but reflect that *it is his respect for her that makes her husband share his intemperance* or violent behavior with another woman. [italics mine] (Plutarch, *Conj. praec.* 16)<sup>393</sup>

Even the moral philosopher Plutarch appealed to the tolerance of legal wives of ancient Persian kings as examples to Roman wives. According to Plutarch, a woman should not only forgive her husband, but also be supportive of him if he has sexual intercourse with his mistress and should embrace her husband's reckless sexual behaviour. It shows that extramarital sex, at least under certain circumstances, was acceptable for married men according to the social norm.

For married women, I have shown in section 4.3.1 that one characteristic of the new Roman women's movement was female sexual liberty: she could fall in love with whoever she pleased and the adulterous acts of married women were even honoured in popular dramas and poetry. The love poets glorified extramarital affairs initiated by new Roman women as a realisation of individual freedom of romantic love and these ideals were prevalent in society and not confined to women in the upper class. So Roman men and women were still available for affairs (romantic or casual sex) with other people even after they were married. The main purpose of marriage was to give legitimate status to their children in order to sustain

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<sup>393</sup> "Advice to the Bride and Groom" (Donald Russell, *Plutarch's Advice to the Bride and Groom, and A Consolation to his Wife: English Translations, Commentary, Interpretive Essays, and Bibliography* [ed. Sarah B. Pomeroy; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999], 7).

the Roman Empire, rather than holding the couple accountable to a faithful mutual commitment.<sup>394</sup>

Besides, the marriage relationship was seen as temporal and although the Romans had an ideal of lifelong union, in practice they were likely to divorce. The gap between an ideal life-long marriage and a realistic fragile one could be observed from an inscription in Rome around 18-2 B.C.:

Uncommon are marriages which last so long, brought to an end by death, not broken apart by divorce; for it was our happy lot that it should be prolonged to the 41<sup>st</sup> year without estrangement. Would that our venerable association had been dissolved by something happening to me rather than to you, by which it would have been fairer that I as the older surrendered to fate....Distinctive of you are these features which I am declaring, and very few women have met with similar circumstances so that they should suffer such experiences and manifest such achievements, matters which the Fortune of women has taken care to ensure are seldom their lot.<sup>395</sup>

From this epitaph it can be seen that a Roman man treasured a life-long marriage but shows how novel it was.

It is not difficult to figure out the contingent nature of marriage from a nuanced study of the first century world. First of all, it was relatively easy to divorce compared with the present times according to the law and both men and women could easily initiate divorce. Unlike most modern cultures where couples must wait for a period of time to get their

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<sup>394</sup> Dixon, *The Roman Family*, 62.

<sup>395</sup> G.H.R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity, vol. 3: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1978* (North Ryde, N.S.W.: Macquarie University, Ancient History Documentary Research Center: 1983), 34, col. 1. For the original Latin epitaph, see *NewDocs* 3: 33.

marriage dissolved, in first century Roman culture they could divorce right away. The husband simply drafted a divorce certificate and returned the dowry to the wife; there was a strong incentive to divorce if a younger more beautiful woman was available for marriage. For women, the Roman Law empowered her autonomy from her husband rather than encouraging her to stay in the marriage and a woman remained in her father's family and under his protection even after she was married. She could inherit her father's wealth when he died and her private property was not shared or used by her husband although she nominally belonged to his family.

In brief, from the perspective of the Roman Law, the man and the woman were still regarded as two persons, not becoming one person: "In law, then, the conjugal couple was not one financial entity but two, with the wife enjoying complete legal independence in the ownership of property after her father's death."<sup>396</sup> Thus, the enforcement of the law of marriage was loose and weak.

The divorce and private property rights of women gave them, at least those from wealthy families, freedom and the temptation to divorce <sup>397</sup> especially in the light of the prevalence of male chauvinism, often resulting from the large age gap, probably over ten years, between husband and wife. Husbands usually played the role of guardian over their young wives when they married but as the women grew up and became mature, they had a strong incentive to seek autonomy and freedom from the domination of their husbands.

The disharmony in a typical Roman family is reflected in Seneca's letter to Novatus:

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<sup>396</sup> Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture* (London: Duckworth, 1987), 130.

<sup>397</sup> Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 135-6.

*You're indignant* that a slave answered back to you, and a freedman too, and *your wife*, and a client. Then you turn around and complain that the free speech you've destroyed at home has been torn from the commonwealth....Let him speak and be silent—and laugh too! “In his master’s presence?” you ask. No; in the presence of the household’s father. Why shout? Why raise a ruckus? *Why go for the whip in the middle of dinner* because slaves are talking.... [italics mine] (Seneca, *Ira* 3.35)<sup>398</sup>

With this additional consideration of the “temper” of the old husband against a young woman, it was “tempting” for the woman to initiate divorce when she had grown up and asserted her rights.

The temporal character of marriage in the Graeco-Roman world is further confirmed by the following literary evidence: a marriage contract in A.D. 66 found in Egypt. For the sake of clarity, H=husband; W=wife; WF = wife’s father:

[Time, Place]. H acknowledges to WF that he has received from him as a dowry on his daughter W, who has previously been living with H as his wife, [list of dowry], and as *parapherna*, [list of wife's personal belongings], and without valuation in usufruct and as a gift from the current year, [a field, described in detail]. Wherefore let the parties to the marriage, W and H, live together blamelessly as they have previously been doing, H conducting all the agricultural work of each year on [the field]. If a difference (διαφοράς) arise between them and they separate from each other ([χ]ωρίζονται ἀπ' ἀλλήλων), whether H sends away (ἀποπέμποντος) W or she voluntarily leaves him (ἐκουσίως ἀπαλλασσομένης [ἀ]π' αὐτοῦ), [the field]

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<sup>398</sup> “On Anger” (Robert A. Kaster, *Seneca: Anger, Mercy, Revenge* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010], 90).

shall belong to WF or, if he is no longer alive, to W. And H shall moreover return to her the aforesaid dowry and the *parapherna* in whatever state they may eventually be through wear, in the case of dismissal (αποπομπῆς) immediately, and in the case of her voluntary departure (ἐκουσ[ί]οι ἀπαλλαγῆς) within 30 days of demand.<sup>399</sup>

This marriage contract indicates that it was common practice for a man and woman to *prepare for divorce right at the beginning of their marriage*. If the wife initiated a divorce, a divorce certificate was what she needed to release her for future remarriage.<sup>400</sup> If she did not intend to be remarried, a divorce certificate was not necessary and she could walk away from the husband's family right away, but the children would remain in the husband's family.

The official divorce process was confined only to authorised legitimate marriage, *conubium*, where both husband and wife were Roman citizens who, because of their citizenship, were entitled to pass the citizenship and legitimate status on to their children. The majority of the population in the Roman world, however, were not qualified to acquire this legally recognised marriage *conubium* because of their low social status and their children were illegitimate. This means it was not necessary for the majority of ordinary people to go through any legal process like Roman citizens to get married so divorce took place when one partner left and went elsewhere.

Finally, the temporal nature of marriage resulted from the fading of the shameful stigma of divorce since the second century B.C. Even the moral philosopher Plutarch had been

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<sup>399</sup> P.Ryl. 154 (A. S. Hunt and C. C. Edgar, *Select Papyri* [LCL; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932] 1: 12-17). This citation is a summarised translation of David Instone-Brewer of that papyrus. See David Instone-Brewer, "1 Corinthians 7 in the Light of the Graeco-Roman Marriage and Divorce Papyri," *TynBul* 51.2 (2001): 101-115. [pp. 103-4]

<sup>400</sup> See Hunt and Edgar, *Select Papyri*, 1: 22-27 for examples of deed of divorce in the first century.

divorced and admitted that it could be caused by “the slight and frequent frictions arising from some unpleasantness or incongruity of characters” (Plutarch, *Aem.* 5.1 [Perrin, LCL]).

No-fault divorce was popular and prevalent in the Graeco-Roman culture in Paul’s time.<sup>401</sup>

Thus, the maintenance of the marital relationship depended on the mutual commitment of the man and woman to the family, the dowry as “collateral” and the community support of the two kinship families from which the husband and wife originated. The constraints from the Roman Law and social norms against divorce were weak.

In conclusion, marriage was regarded as sexually open and temporal in the social ethos.

### **5.1.2 How can Marriage Avoid Sexual Immorality?**

If marriage was normally regarded as sexually open and temporal, it is difficult to understand 1 Cor 7:2, 9: how can marriage stop one from committing sexual immorality? It definitely puzzled the neophytes when Paul said that each should have their own spouse because of sexual immorality or “it is better to marry than to be inflamed” (v.9), for according to their understanding, a married man or woman continued to have sex with people other than their spouse. On the other hand, based on Paul’s reminder of the scriptural echoes in 1 Cor 5-6, sexual immorality was clearly defined as sexual intercourse with people other than one’s spouse. *How can marriage, which was usually deemed as open, help one avoid the sexual immorality condemned in Scripture?*

Under the theme of holiness of the body, Alister Scott May has proposed that Paul set up a practical tripartite hierarchy in 1 Cor 7: celibacy is preferable to marriage, and marriage to sexual immorality.<sup>402</sup> Marriage was regarded as a concession or a safety net to prevent people from falling into sexual immorality which results in breaking the spiritual union with

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<sup>401</sup> Dixon, *The Roman Family*, 69.

<sup>402</sup> May, ‘*The Body of the Lord*,’ 129.

Christ. If one was not subject to such sexual temptation, Paul suggested celibacy to the Christian, a suggestion which went against the preference of marriage in the culture.

There are weaknesses, however, with May's arguments for such a tripartite hierarchy. First, he overlooks the radical difference between Paul's concept of marriage and its common understanding in the social ethos: marriage as open and temporal. This common evaluation of marriage could not help Christians avoid sexual immorality so May's notion of the "safety net" of marriage does not stand. Secondly, his interpretation of 1 Cor 6-7 overlooks the radical difference between Paul's concept of marriage and illicit sexual unions. The basic value orientation of licit sex in 7:1-4 is other-regarding, fulfilling the *spouse's* sexual desire, while having sex with prostitutes is fulfilling *one's own sexual desire*. These opposing purposes of the sexual act makes it difficult to draw parallels between licit and illicit sexual relationships.<sup>403</sup> As will be seen in the coming exegesis, sexual relations in marriage are totally different from self-gratifying sexual activities in other illicit relationships and the problems of divided devotion to the Lord in 7:32-35 were due to a specific kind of marriage rather than marriage in general.

*I propose that a reasonable answer to the question "how can marriage avoid sexual immorality" is this: Paul redefines Christian marriage as sexually closed and life-long.* He does not go against the culture by way of his advocacy of celibacy, as May suggests, but by educating the Corinthians into a radical concept of marriage which is new to the neophytes but familiar in the Jewish scripture as well as the Dominical logion (sayings of the Lord). Paul does not quench the fire of sexual passion to combat the sexually immoral ethos. Similar to 1 Cor 5 where he redirects and confines the practice of tolerance exclusively to the immoral practice of outsiders, here also Paul redirects the object of sexual passion from many to one: exclusively to your spouse. Once the church members live out the marriages advocated by Paul, faithful (sexually closed) and life-long, they create a visible differentiation of the church insiders from outsiders.

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<sup>403</sup> May states the difference between marriage and *πορνεία*: the latter is sin while the former is not. However, May still attempts to draw parallels of marriage and sexual immorality in terms of breaking one's undivided devotion to the Lord: allowing one's body to be mastered by one's spouse conflicts with the highest ideal of "body for the Lord." Married believers could only hold "a second-class commitment to the Lord." See May, *The Body for The Lord*, 106.

As Paul's definition of marriage as life-long in 7:10-16 appeals to the Lord's sayings instead of the scriptures, the rhetorical analysis of vv.10-16 will be conducted in chapter 6. In this chapter, we focus only on Paul's use of the scripture Gen 2:24 to redefine marriage as sexually closed.

One final remark: I do not preclude the existence of themes other than those of marriage and sexual morality in 1 Cor 7 nor do I exclude the possibility of echoes of other literatures (besides the Jewish scripture) in 1 Cor 7. Recent scholarship has suggested Stoic literature,<sup>404</sup> ancient medical texts<sup>405</sup> and Greek romantic novels<sup>406</sup> as interpretative contexts of 1 Cor 7. Because of the interests of my study, I focus on the exploration of the correlation of Paul's use of Scripture and redefinition of marriage in 1 Cor 7.

## 5.2 The Rhetorical Purposes of Gen 2:24 in 1 Cor 7:2-9

After numerous rebukes against sexual immorality, Paul moves forward to the positive aspect of sex: a brother or sister should build up a life-long, sexually exclusive marital relationship with his or her spouse in order to combat sexual immorality.

There are no direct echoes of Scripture found in 1 Cor 7 that pass the three criteria: word agreement, rarity and availability. However, I observe that Paul's teachings about marriage among insiders in 1 Cor 7:2-9 is firmly grounded in Gen 2:24. After all, the context of the quoted scripture Gen 2:24 is not primarily that of sexual immorality but rather, on the meaning of marriage consisting of one man and one woman. After deriving negative prohibitions against sexual immorality in 1 Cor 6, it is then reasonable for Paul to expound positively in 1

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<sup>404</sup> Will Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*.

<sup>405</sup> Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body*.

<sup>406</sup> Loveday Alexander, " 'Better to Marry than to Burn': St. Paul and the Greek Novel," in *Ancient Fiction and Early Christian Narrative* (ed. R.F. Hock, J. B. Chance and J. Perkins; SBLSymS 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 235-56; J. Edward Ellis, *Paul and Ancient Views of Sexual Desire: Paul's Sexual Ethics in 1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 7 and Romans 1* (LNTS 354; London: T. & T. Clark International, 2007), 9, 147-59.



Cor 7:2-9 on the meanings of the “one flesh” Biblical citation given in 6:16b and apply this scripture to the marital lives of insiders.<sup>407</sup>

### 5.2.1 Marriage as Sexually Closed

In 7:2, Paul sets up marriage as an antidote to the sexual immorality specifically referred to in 7:1: one who commits sexual sin with the opposite sex. The reason why marriage can help one avoid sexual immorality is explained as follows:

<sup>3</sup> τῇ γυναικὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἀποδιδότω, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ  
ἡ γυνὴ [τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἀποδιδότω]  
τῷ ἀνδρί.

<sup>4</sup> ἡ γυνὴ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει ἀλλὰ ὁ ἀνὴρ, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ  
ὁ ἀνὴρ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει ἀλλὰ ἡ γυνή.

These two verses bear the same pattern: the second half of the verse is expressed in almost identical words except the exchange of place of the word husband (ἀνὴρ) and wife (γυνή).

This states explicitly the duty of the husband towards the wife, and vice versa.<sup>408</sup> The normative command ἀποδιδότω in v.3 is based on the indicative descriptive objective condition stated in v.4 τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος οὐκ ἐξουσιάζει. Therefore 7:3-4 is better translated in reverse order:

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<sup>407</sup> 7:2-9 is addressed to a believing couple because Paul assumes that they devote themselves to prayer in 7:5.

<sup>408</sup> See my exegesis in section 2.1.2.

[Because] the rights/authority of the wife's own body lies not on hers but on the husband's, and vice versa, the wife should render (*ἀποδιδότω*) the debt to the husband, and vice versa.

Paul assumes 7:4 as a fact. In a male-centred world, it was easy for the men to agree with Paul's saying that the rights of the wife's body lie not with her but with her husband. The converse, however, is a novel idea: the rights of the husband's body lie not with him but with the wife. This implies that the sexual activity of the husband is controlled by the wife, which is contrary to the common sense of men. Nor does Paul's teaching square with the New Women's movement which advocated many new rights for women in the public sphere, and sexual liberty. The Roman Law explicitly stated the financial independence of husband and wife, where each individual owned his/her property. Therefore it was also contrary to the common understanding of women when Paul states that the authority over a wife's own body lies not with her but with the husband. Where does this new concept of marriage (one's body is owned by one's spouse) come from?

Rosner suggests that it is an allusion to Exod 21:10, where the Torah commands that the man who marries a second wife should keep on providing three things to the first wife. One is marital rights (*ὀμιλία*) which can be a euphemism for proper sexual intercourse within marriage.<sup>409</sup> The key problem with this explanation is that Exod 21:10 lies in the context of polygamy and a woman divorcing her husband. In the context of 1 Cor 7, however, Paul stands against both issues.<sup>410</sup> Thus, it is improbable that Paul intends the audience to recall

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<sup>409</sup> Rosner, *Paul, Scripture, and Ethics*, 159.

<sup>410</sup> In the second temple period, pious Jews have unanimously aborted the practice of polygamy and so Paul, as a pious Jew, is no exception. For his stand towards divorce, see 7:10-11.

this scripture endorsing polygamy and divorce as it would have been contrary to his prohibition of divorce in 7:10-11.

Another suggestion for the source of this new concept “one’s body is owned by one’s spouse” is Stoic teaching on marriage proposed by Will Deming who rejects the notion of “one flesh” derived from Gen 2:24 as a parallel to 7:4. His argument is mainly based on an argument of silence: Paul does not explicitly mention the reference “the two shall become one flesh” in 7:4.<sup>411</sup> However, when Deming cites the Stoic literature like Antipater’s *On Marriage*, Musoinus’ *Is Marriage an Impediment to the Pursuit of Philosophy?* and *What is the Chief Aspect of Marriage?* to argue for parallels with 7:4, the common theme is still the mutual ownership and sharing of the bodies of husband and wife.<sup>412</sup> It seems that Deming’s suggestion is questionable. If a simple scripture “the two shall become *one* flesh” has just been mentioned a few verses before 7:4 which already expresses explicitly the theme of mutual sharing of bodies, why should we appeal to Stoic literature to account for it? Moreover, as 7:4 is assumed without further explanation, why does Paul make an assumption based on Stoic philosophy instead of a well-known scripture? Why do we think that the audience will understand an allusion to these Stoic texts instead of the scripture that Paul has just mentioned a few verses before?

*I propose that the concept of marriage in 7:4 is derived from Gen 2:24 and its context.*

First, in the creation story of man and woman, God took Adam’s rib (πλευράν) to create woman (LXX Gen 2:22). This corresponds to Paul’s assertion in 1 Cor 7:4 that the husband rules over the body of his wife (who, in Genesis, is made out of his rib) as Adam exclaimed that his woman was “bone out of my bones and flesh out of my flesh” (Gen 2:23). On the other hand,

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<sup>411</sup> Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 115, and n.39 in pp.115-6.

<sup>412</sup> Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 117-20.

man will leave (καταλείψει) the parents and cleave (προσκολληθήσεται) to the woman. This leaving-and-cleaving metaphor vividly displays the imagery of a plant leaving its mother plant and joining with another plant. It shows that, to a certain extent, the role of parents is displaced by the wife. Just as the parents have rights over the man, the wife, to a certain extent, has rights over her husband. While parents “own” their children while they are young, now the ownership of the man is transferred to his wife. In addition to the Jewish tradition that the husband is the owner of the wife, the mutual ownership of husband and wife is established.

Secondly, the connection of Gen 2:24 and Gen 2:25 gives us the best account for understanding Paul’s logic here from the indicative of mutual ownership (7:4) to the imperative of mutual indebtedness of husband and wife in 7:3. As shown above, Gen 2:24 implies the mutual ownership of husband and wife. Genesis 2:25 states one consequence of this union: “And the two were naked, both Adam and his wife, and were not ashamed.” One should not be ashamed of being naked before one’s spouse. In other words, the husband should not let his wife feel ashamed when she uncovers herself naked before him, and vice versa. When this meaning of Gen 2:25 is paraphrased in positive terms, 7:3 is then the nearly-equivalent expression.

Beside the allusion to Gen 2:21-25, 1 Cor 6:17 also gives us some hints about the ground of Paul’s assumption in 7:3. The verb root προσκολλάω in Gen 2:24a is strikingly similar to the cleaving (κολλάω) mentioned in 6:17. This spiritual union implies that the Lord has rights over one’s whole life. When one marries, it is also depicted as a cleaving to one’s spouse according to Gen 2:24a. If we apply the “Lordship” principle in 6:17 to the marriage, the spouse then becomes the “Lord” (to a certain extent) of one’s own body, and vice versa. Therefore, the rights of the wife’s body lie not with her but her husband, and vice versa, for one’s spouse “lords” over one’s body. This is exactly the statement in 7:3.

Paul emphasised the submission of one's rights concerning sexual intercourse to one's spouse but does not mention procreation as a purpose of marital sex. In his teachings about marriage in other epistles (e.g. Eph 5:21-33; Col 3:18-19), he does not mention procreation as the purpose of marriage either. Rather, he quotes Gen 2:24 again in Eph 5:31 to illustrate the union of Christ and the church as well as the mutual submission of husband and wife (Eph 5:21). Paul seems to show that the purpose for sexual intercourse in marriage is not chiefly instrumental (for procreation) but is a way of realising loving service of each other and mutual submission. First Corinthians 7:3-4 shares this theme with Eph 5:21-33 and so it further indicates the relevance of Gen 2:24 in 1 Cor 7:3-4.

As a result, this mutual ownership and indebtedness in the marital relationship condemns men "touching" other women, for his right to have sex no longer lies in his hands, but his wife's. Thus, the concept of open marriage is condemned. For those Christ-followers who have been cleaved to the Lord, their marriages differ from those of outsiders; for Christ-followers, marriages are closed and exclusive. Neither man nor woman should have sex with other women or men, whether it is self-gratifying sex with prostitutes or long-term romantic relationships with other people. Because of this exclusiveness, *extra-marital* affairs are well-defined and condemned and the concept of a sexually closed marriage is preliminarily formed.

### **5.2.2 Sexual Intercourse in Marriage > Devotion to Prayer**

In 7:5-6, Paul commands married believers "do not deprive each other." The concession mentioned in v.6 refers to the exceptional situation of sexual abstinence within marriage in v.5: when one hopes to devote oneself in prayer. Even so, this denial of sexual requests is but a concession and not a command and should come with mutual consent. In other words, if one's spouse is not willing to give up his request, one should still participate in the sexual

activity with one's spouse and delay one's own devotion to prayer, as David E. Garland states: "The spiritual life does not cut a person off from the natural order of creation, and religious devotion is not to become a pretext for withholding sex from one's spouse."<sup>413</sup>

Paul then further reminds married Christians of their consideration to their spouses who are not gifted in celibacy. Deming has clarified the phrase "ὁ μὲν οὕτως, ὁ δὲ οὕτως" in v.7 as follows:

the preceding verses indicate that the contrast Paul draws in 7.7 is not one between incontinent *married* Christians, on the one side, and continent *unmarried* Christians, on the other, but between those *married* Christians who are able to forgo sexual relations and those who are not...Most probably, therefore, Paul's mention of the *charismata* is a reminder to those spouses who are advocating abstinence that all Christians, including their own husbands and wives, are not endowed with the same gifts. What we see in 1 Corinthians 7.7, in other words, is both Paul's deference to the celibate tendencies of these spouses, and his insistence that their demands are overbearing.<sup>414</sup>

Therefore, Paul in v.7 still keeps on urging the wife to have sex with her husband whenever he expresses his sexual request, and vice versa. The rhetorical function of the conjunction ἀλλὰ in v.7 is similar to the adverbial phrase "μᾶλλον δὲ" in 14:5, where Paul's main point lies after the adverb phrase, instead of his wish before it: *putting priority on the overbearing sexual drive of one's spouse who does not have the gift of celibacy.*

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<sup>413</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 262.

<sup>414</sup> Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 125.

This care for those without the gift of celibacy is another application of the intimate relation of the newly defined marriage, as described in in Gen 2:24. It also demonstrates the correlation of marital union in 1 Cor 6:16b and spiritual union with the Lord in 6:17: one's marital life can strengthen one's union with the Lord. The mutual consideration of sexual needs of Christian couples protects them from becoming betrayers—falling into the temptation of Satan. Thus, the clause after the conjunction ἀλλὰ in 7:7b can be interpreted as a repetition of the clause after ἵνα μὴ in 1 Cor 7:5: “lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control.”

### 5.2.3 Avoiding Sexual Sin > Taking Care of One's Children

If marriage of insiders means “the two become one flesh” in Gen 2:24, what would happen after their spouse passes away? 7:8-9 properly responds to this question where Paul addresses the widows and widowers in vv.8-9.<sup>415</sup> Because of the common practice of bearing children right after marriage at that time, they were probably widowed mothers and fathers. Widows retained their membership in the kinship family of the deceased husband and were protected and supported by his family. Roman law and social norms tended to discourage a widow from remarriage:

Some Roman fathers were inclined to trust their widows only as long as they did not bring a second husband into the house. The threat to the mother's devotion posed by remarriage was not taken lightly....Around AD 100 the jurist Neratius allowed for

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<sup>415</sup> This interpretation of unmarried as widowers in 7:8 is based on the teachings of mutuality of gender in the context and the Greek term “widower” is seldom used in the koine Greek literature. See Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 287-8; Hays, *First Corinthians*, 118; Collins, *First Corinthians*, 263; O. Larry Yarbrough, “Paul, Marriage, and Divorce,” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 404-28. [p.419] *Contra* Thiselton, who interprets ‘unmarried’ as divorced men or women. See Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 515-6.

the possibility that mothers could petition the emperor for special dispensation to act as tutor for their children. In the later empire this possibility was generalized, but only if the mother took an oath that she would not remarry.<sup>416</sup>

In other words, the widowed mother might lose her right of being a guardian (tutor) of her children and likewise might lose the trust and protection of the family of her deceased husband if she remarried. When she remarried, the widow changed her social status and joined the kinship family of her new husband. It was not likely that her new husband would take care of her existing children so they were likely to be emancipated from her and became like orphans.

For widowers, their children did not face the problems of widows' children, as they remained in the kinship family of their father. However, when a widower remarried, it was likely that the stepmother would pay more attention to her own children than her husband's previous children so there were still risks endangering the welfare of the children of widowers if they remarried. If the widowers remained single, their children could avoid being despised, and the widower and his family could raise them with undivided devotion so the children avoided the complicated relations with their new stepmother and step-siblings resulting from their father's remarriage.

Thus, 7:8-9 is interpreted as follows: for widowed parents, it is good [for the well-being of their children] to remain [single] as Paul himself is. But if they lack self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to be burnt (*πυροῦσθαι* passive infinitive).

There is one final puzzle to resolve in order to understand fully these two verses: the meaning of the last verb *πυροῦσθαι*. Commentators and translators unanimously translate

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<sup>416</sup> Saller, *Patriarchy, Property and Death in the Roman Family*, 175.



this verb “burn” as “inflamed with sexual passion.” Thus vv.8-9 means that marriage can regulate one’s sexual passion if one lacks control of his/her sexual desire.

However, a nuanced word study shows that it is rare to relate the metaphorical meaning of “burn” with sexual passion. *This verb burn (πυρόω) appears frequently in the OT and NT but it never refers to sexual passion either in OT<sup>417</sup> or in the rest of the NT.<sup>418</sup>* In the passive voice, it is often translated as “purified”, “tested” with fire or being “inflamed with anger”; it never means “being inflamed with sexual passion” in other biblical texts.

I do not mean to preclude the possibility of a sexual connotation to the metaphorical meaning of “burn” in 1 Cor 7:9. However, the above word study in the Bible is sufficient to remind us that Paul’s emphasis is not on sexual passion per se but rather the possible serious consequence of sin against God ensuing from it. “Be burnt” means “to be tempted sexually” and refers to the seduction to sin against God. “Burn” is not an objective description of the intensity of sexual desire happening in one’s physical body or the “heat of passion”, as Dale Martin suggests.<sup>419</sup> “Burn” means metaphorically a status of tension between one’s will and the will of God, a strong possibility of committing sin against God. Vv.8-9 is then interpreted as follows:

To widowed parents, it is good [for the well-being of their children] to remain [single] as Paul himself is. But if they lack self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to be tempted into committing sexual immorality.

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<sup>417</sup> 2 Sam 22:31; Est 5:1; Jdt 8:27; 2 Macc 4:38; 10:3,35; 14:45; 3 Macc 4:2; 4 Macc 9:17; 11:19; Ps 11:7; 16:3; 17:31; 25:2; 65:10; 104:19; 118:140; Prov 10:20; Prov 30:5; Job 22:25; Zech 13:9; Isa 1:25; Jer 9:6; Daniel (TH) 11:35; 12:10.

<sup>418</sup> 2 Cor 11:29; Eph 6:16; 2 Pet 3:12; Rev 1:15; Rev 3:18.

<sup>419</sup> Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, 212-4.

*Thus, the main point Paul exhorts in vv.8-9 is that he trumps the significance of avoiding sexual sin over the possibility of depriving the welfare of one's children.* Between these two possible negative consequences, Paul prefers the Corinthian audience to avoid the former. It is good for widows / widowers to remain single for the sake of their children. However, if they lack self-control on the management of sexual desire, they are likely to commit sexual intercourse with inappropriate persons, either with prostitutes (for men) or womanisers (for women, probably itinerant poets who can fill their lonely hearts). According to the social norm, this kind of casual sexual intercourse is normal, yet Paul stresses the serious consequence of this temptation. If they commit this sin (sexual immorality), it will break their union with Christ (cf. 6:15-17). Again, the rationale of Paul's prioritization is grounded in his teaching of a new concept of marriage defined from Gen 2:24 and the new function of marriage for building up the spiritual union with the Lord in 1 Cor 6:17. Protecting themselves from committing sexual sin is thus more important than the potential difficulties of their children in the future new family with step-parents. Verse 9 seems to repeat the main point of 7:2 and forms an *inclusio*.

Finally, because of the absence of the purpose of procreation of sexual intercourse in marriage in 1 Cor 7:1-7 and Paul's priority of marriage for avoiding sexual sin over the welfare of the children of the widowed, it is reasonable to conclude that Paul is not a "procreationist" with regard to marital relations. Unlike some Jewish traditions and Stoic teachings on marriage that emphasise procreation as its main purpose, Paul emphasises the practice of mutual submission and service as the main purpose of marriage, along with the avoidance of sexual immorality (through practising a sexually closed relationship). Paul may assume bearing children in marriage but procreation is the fruit, not the goal.

### 5.3. The Common Theme between 1 Cor 7 and 1 Cor 8-11:1

#### 5.3.1 Εἰδωλόθυτα as Idol Meals

From 1 Cor 8:1 onwards, Paul discusses another issue: εἰδωλόθυτα. First of all, the proper translation of this key term εἰδωλόθυτα here in 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 is determined. This clarifies the issue Paul intends to address.

Εἰδωλόθυτα is usually translated as “idol meat” because people often kill animals as sacrifices to gods and Paul has mentioned “meat” (κρέας) in 8:13 as a stumbling block against brothers. However, Peter D. Gooch has argued that it should not be translated as “idol meat.” He adopts a more inclusive translation “idol food” instead of “idol meat” because:

i) Paul explicitly coins the issue as Περὶ τῆς βρώσεως in 8:4, where βρώσεως refers to food in general;

ii) Paul mentions food (βρῶμα) as the cause of making others stumble in 8:13;

iii) Paul mentions εἰδωλόθυτα on the occasion of one eating in the temple (8:10), drinking (10:21) and attending a private dinner of unbelievers (10:25). All occasions are not confined only to meat. Eating meat in 8:13b is just one instance of eating εἰδωλόθυτα, not its definition.

Thus, Gooch concludes that it should be translated as “idol food.”<sup>420</sup>

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<sup>420</sup> Peter D. Gooch, *Dangerous Food: 1 Corinthians 8-10 in Its Context* (Studies in Christianity and Judaism 5; Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1993), 53-55. See also Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 15.

However, as Gooch has pointed out that drinking the cup of demons (10:21) is also an instance of εἰδωλόθυτα, εἰδωλόθυτα is then not confined to eating food alone but also includes drinking liquor. Moreover, all instances of εἰδωλόθυτα mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor 8-11:1 refer to communal dining instead of one person eating food alone (e.g. 8:10; 10:27). It shows that the issue Paul addresses here is not the nature of food per se, but rather the social meaning of eating idol meals tacitly assumed by people in Corinthian society. Thus, it includes the whole process of communal dining, both the occasion, eating, entertainment between courses and drinking wine which had been used for making libation to gods. Therefore, it is preferable to translate εἰδωλόθυτα into a more inclusive term “idol meals”—social meals related to worship of idols.

If the meal is related to eating meat, as Paul mentioned in 8:13, it is still related to its social function. The scarcity of meat in the first century world indicates the close relation of eating meat and idolatry in its social context, as Sanders observes:

This points towards relative scarcity of meat...many Gentiles may have eaten little meat except what was sacrificed....At festivals there were sacrifices, and these may have supplied much of the meat in the ordinary person's diet. While we cannot know what percentage of the total meat available in a Graeco-Roman city was from sacrificial animals, it appears from 1 Corinthians that it *could* constitute a substantial problem, especially for Gentile converts, who were accustomed to eating it.<sup>421</sup>

Thus, when Paul mentions eating meat in 8:13, he still seems to relate it to social meals in the context of festivals. The relationship between eating idol meals and committing idolatry lies

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<sup>421</sup> E.P. Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 281.

in its social meaning as perceived by the society, not with the food per se. Thus, meat offered to idols can also be regarded as a kind of idol meal.

Having clarified the issue as idol meal, its close connection with the preceding context is more apparent.

### 5.3.2 Idolatry and Sexual Immorality being Inseparable

In chapter 2 of this thesis, I have shown the literary unity of 1 Cor 5-11:1. This unitary design of 1 Cor 5-11:1 is often overlooked by the majority of commentators and monographs. There is not one published monograph which interprets these six chapters together. Based on the introductory remark in 8:1: concerning the idol meals (Περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων)...., many monographs handle 1 Cor 8-11:1 as an independent section of 1 Corinthians concerning εἰδωλόθυτα and few interpret these three chapters in the light of 1 Cor 5-7.<sup>422</sup> This dominant approach refers only to the social context and archaeological findings of temples in ancient Corinth, or Paul's own rhetorical purpose of εἰδωλόθυτα in 1 Cor 8-11:1. Although it is commendable for us to understand the historical situation of eating idol meals, this consideration is insufficient for us to fully understand Paul's teaching about idol meals. No matter how they are considered in the thought world of Paul or the social world of the

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<sup>422</sup> See my literature review in chapter 1. Besides monographs of Cheung, Fotopoulos and Phua mentioned there, here are some representative monographs in the past twenty years concerning idol meals in Corinth. Almost all ignore its literary and compositional unity with 1 Cor 5-7 and interprets 1 Cor 8-11:1 without considering the possibility of intra-textual echoes of 1 Cor 5-7: Peter D. Gooch, *Dangerous Food*; Khiok-Khng Yeo, *Rhetorical Interaction in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10: A Formal Analysis with Preliminary Suggestions for a Chinese, Cross Cultural Hermeneutic* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995); Derek Newton, *Deity and Diet: The Dilemma of Sacrificial Food at Corinth* (JSNTSup 169; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); Joop F.M. Smit, *About the Idol Offerings: Rhetoric, Social Context, and Theology of Paul's Discourse in First Corinthians 8:1-11:1* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000); B. J. Oropeza, *Paul and Apostasy: Eschatology, Perseverance and Falling Away in the Corinthian Congregation* (WUNT 2.115; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

Corinthian audience, the issues of idol meals (εἰδωλόθυτα) and sexual immorality (πορνεία) are inseparable.

From the thought world of Paul:

- 1) As I have shown in chapter 2, there is literary integrity in 1 Cor 5—11:1 and thematic parallels in 1 Cor 5-7 and 1 Cor 8-11:1. Paul designs these six chapters to be considered as a unit.
- 2) The juxtaposition of sexual immorality and idolatry in Paul's vice list is remarkable. Idolater (εἰδωλόλατρες) is mentioned just after the person committing sexual immorality (πόρνος) in 6:9. Then in his warning against eating idol food in 1 Cor 10:7-8, Paul mentions the danger of committing sexual immorality right after his warnings against dangers of committing idolatry in eating idol food. In Paul's mind, they are closely related and are often juxtaposed.
- 3) In 1 Cor 6:13, Paul parallels "food not for the stomach" with "body not for sexual immorality."
- 4) As Stephen Barton rightly points out, rules for food, sex and idolatry are common practice of early Christians who are redrawing the boundary, "from distinguishing Jews and Gentiles to distinguishing believers and unbelievers."<sup>423</sup> Paul has probably inherited this common Jewish tradition of drawing a group boundary with these three kinds of rules which play a significant

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<sup>423</sup> Stephen C. Barton, "Food Rules, Sex Rules and the Prohibition of Idolatry. What's the Connection?" in *Idolatry: False Worship in the Bible, Early Judaism and Christianity* (ed. Stephen C. Barton; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 141-62. [p.143]

role in the “*deformation and reformation* of cultures that accompanied the birth of Christianity.”<sup>424</sup>

5) There are echoes of numerous scriptures both in 1 Cor 5-7 and 8—11:1. In the OT tradition, the *metaphorical* meaning of sexual immorality (πορνεία) is idolatry (e.g. Hos 4:11-12; Ezek 16). It is thus not uncommon for Paul to mention the metaphorical πορνεία right after the literal one.

From the perspective of the Corinthian audience, sexual immorality is also inseparable from idol meals in their social life:

- 1) Based on the socio-historical study of sex entertainment after dining by Fotopoulos, social meals in the temple banquets were usually accompanied with prostitutes, together with “intoxication and sexual play with flute girls, prostitutes, or boyish wine-servers,”<sup>425</sup> as a package sideshow for the guests to show the “honour and considerate hospitality” of the hosts. Banquets in the temple is one key issue Paul addresses in 1 Cor 8:10. The sex entertainment it entails fits the definition of sexual immorality according to Scripture.
- 2) One typical social event in the temple was the wedding banquet. When Paul warns them against attending banquets in the temple in 1 Cor 8:10, it is plausible for Corinthian Christians to recall their attendance at wedding banquets in the temple as well as the social banquets with their unbelieving idolatrous spouses. This prohibition affects their marriage and family life, just mentioned in 1 Cor 7.

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<sup>424</sup> Barton, “Food Rules, Sex Rules and the Prohibition of Idolatry,” 144. From the perspective of cultural anthropology, Barton has pointed out fourteen similarities of these three rules in pp.145-152.

<sup>425</sup> Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth*, 231.

## 5.4 OT Allusions in 1 Cor 8-11:1

Numerous scholars have attempted to figure out the OT echoes of 1 Cor 8—11:1. Scholars have come to a consensus that there are numerous OT echoes in these three chapters but they dispute which specific scriptures Paul alludes to, and just what the inter-textual interpretation should be. The following are my summary of the echoes that pass my test of word agreement, availability and rarity.

8:4-6 “There is no God but one.”  
☞ Deut 6:4 the Shema<sup>426</sup>

9:9b ☞ Deut 25:4

9:10c ☞ Isa 28:24, 28

10:1 ☞ Red Sea event

Under the cloud, pass through the sea  
☞ Exod 13:21 Pillar of Cloud and Fire leading Israelites in the wilderness

Our Fathers ☞ Psa 77:3; 105:7

10:3-4

Wilderness provision of God  
☞ Deut 32:13

10:3 πνευματικὸν βρῶμα  
☞ Psa 77:24 heavenly bread ἄρτον οὐρανοῦ;

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<sup>426</sup> Cf. N.T. Wright, “Monotheism, Christology and Ethics: 1 Corinthians 8,” in *The Climax of the Covenant*, 120-36.



10:4a πνευματικὸν πόμα      ☞ events of water springing from the rock in wilderness: Exod 17:6; Num 20:8-13; Deut 8:15; Psa 77:15-16

10:7b      ☞ Exod 32:6b, recalling the golden calf event

10:8 Sexual Immorality      ☞ Num 25:1-9 Sexual Immorality with Moabite women in Shittim.  
Yet Paul changes the number 24000 in Num 25:9 into 23000.  
Maybe it is an allusion to Exod 32:28.<sup>427</sup>

10:9

destroyed by snakes      ☞ Num 21:4-9 ;

Test Christ / the Lord/God      ☞ Deut 6: 16 // Psa 77:18

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<sup>427</sup> This is a well-known interpretation crux in Paul's use of OT in NT. B. J. Koet's proposal seems to be the most plausible resolution, though not without doubt. He suggests that it is Paul's intentional conflation of the serious consequence of both the Golden Calf event tradition and the Moabite women tradition. In 1 Cor 10:8b, Paul refers to 23000 people being executed in *one day*. Paul deliberately mixes Exod 32:28 (3000 people killed in one day after the golden calf event) and Num 25:9. See B. J. Koet, "The OT Background to 1 Cor 10,7-8," in R. Beiringer ed., *The Corinthian Correspondence* (BETL 225; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 607-15. Rohinton Mody modifies Koet's proposal and argues that 23000 is the sum of people killed by Levites in the Golden Calf event (Exod 32:28) and those killed by people imitating the zeal of Phineas in the Baal Peor incident (Num 25:8) in *one day*. It is *not* an allusion to Num 25:9. See Rohinton Mody, " 'The Case of the Missing Thousand': Paul's Use of the Old Testament in 1 Corinthians 10:8—A New Proposal," *Churchman* 121.1 (2007): 61-79.

10:10

☞ three possible events which begin with grumbling and end up in massive deaths punished by God:

Num 11:1-3 complaint of hardship in Taberah or

Num 11:4-34 craving for meat other than manna in Kibroth Hattaavah or

Num 16 rebellion of Levites Korah group against Moses and Aaron

10:13 God is faithful

☞ Deut 32:4 θεὸς πιστός<sup>428</sup>

πιστὸς δὲ ὁ θεός

10:20 δαίμονις καὶ οὐ

☞ Deut 32:17; Ps 95:5; Baruch 4:7

θεῶ [θύουσιν]

10:21

Table of the Lord

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<sup>428</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, n.30 in p.211.

τραπέζης κυρίου      📖 Psa 77:19-20

Table of demons

τραπέζης δαιμονίων      📖 Isaiah 65:11

10:22

Provoke the Lord to

jealousy

παραζηλοῦμεν τὸν κύριον      📖 Deut 32:21; Psa 77:58

10:26      📖 Ps 23:1a

📖 Ps 23:1b; 49:12; 88:12; Exod 19:5; Deut 10:14; Job 41:3

10:1-22      (Suggested pretext/ interpretative lens)

📖 Deut 32,<sup>429</sup> Ps 105<sup>430</sup> or Ps 77 (my own suggestion mainly  
based on word agreement)

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<sup>429</sup> Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 94, n.29 in p.211; Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 148-52, where Cheung acknowledges that 1 Cor 10:18-22 alludes to Deut 32. Although Deut 32 is not coined as subtext, the significance of Deut 32 in understanding 1 Cor 10 has already been noted by Wayne A Meeks, “‘And Rose up to Play’,” 66.

<sup>430</sup> Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 144.

## 5.5 The Social Context of 1 Cor 8-11:1: Eating Idol Meals

Scholars have generally agreed that worshipping idols belonged to the normal social lives of people in Roman Corinth. Moreover, they have pointed out that the significance of eating idol meals is not the food itself but its implication for personal social lives. This communal nature of eating idol meals is inseparable from the religious connotation of idol worship or sacrificial offerings.<sup>431</sup>

However, few scholars have related the issue of eating idol meals with the distinctive history of Roman Corinth as well as the formation of the “Corinthian” civic identity of the audience, similar to the identity of a “Hong Konger” or “New Yorker” in the present time. When the issue of idol meal is divorced from this process of social identity formation and taken as a purely religious activity or personal choice for private social life, it is an inadequate reading of the function of worshipping gods. The idol meal is never a personal affair in the social context of the Mediterranean world but is a public and even political affair. The political function of social meals is evidenced in a law contained in the colonial charter of Urso in Spain in 44 B.C.: *Lex Coloniae Genetivae*. When Roman Corinth was rebuilt and colonised in the same year, it was believed that *the Colonia Laus Iulia Corinthusiensis* was founded on a similar basis. This law limits bribery and the negotiation of commercial benefits in the banquet<sup>432</sup> and thus implies the political and practical social functions of formal banquets, including idol meals.

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<sup>431</sup> Gooch, *Dangerous Food*, 31-46; Newton, *Deity and Diet*, 175-257; Alex Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 27-38; Oropeza, *Paul and Apostasy*, 64-66.

<sup>432</sup> See the interpretation of James C. Walters on this law in James C. Walters, “Paul and the Politics of Meals in Roman Corinth,” in Steven Friesen, Dan Schowalter, and James Walters ed., *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 343-64. [pp.343-51]

I suggest the value of further study of the role of civic identity formation of idol worship with specific reference to the distinctive history of this re-founded Roman colony Corinth. Like traditional festivals, temple worship reminded people of their distinctive past and called people to appreciate their cultural roots.<sup>433</sup> As a result, it informed people who they were and strengthened the solidarity of the city people and thus their civic identity. I propose to investigate how idol worship shapes one's social identity and the correlation of it with one's social life. This may help understanding of the issues Paul intends to address in 1 Cor 8-11:1 through bringing up the issue of εἰδωλόθυτα (idol meals) and the degree of counter-cultural "offensiveness" created in the ears of the first audience.

According to my research of idol meals in Roman Corinth, they are mainly divided into three categories. Each permeates different social aspects of people's lives.

### **5.5.1 Local Deities: Family and Friends Gathering**

The first category refers to the temples of traditional Greek gods revived in the rebuilt city of Roman Corinth: the Temple of Apollo, the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore, the Asklepios, the Sanctuary of Aphrodite and the Sanctuary of Poseidon. They were local Greek deities and represented the unique history of Corinth. In 146 B.C., almost all Greek temples were abolished by Roman soldiers. When Corinth was re-founded by the Roman Empire, these traditional Greek temples were rebuilt to serve the political purpose of legitimating Roman rule and the local deities were perceived by citizens as divine patrons of the city. As these divine patrons were dependant on the Roman government for restoration, it showed that Rome was now their real benefactor and had tamed the previous Greek divine patrons under

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<sup>433</sup> James C. Walters, "Civic Identity in Roman Corinth and Its Impact on Early Christians," in *Urban Religion in Corinth*, 397-417.

Roman domination.<sup>434</sup> However, in order to show the cultural superiority of Rome and her centralised power, the temples were much smaller than before.

These local deities promised to grant protection of the cities and sustainable development of individual families, such as the blessing of fecundity from Aphrodite and physical healings from Asklepios. Most important of all, the temples reminded people of their ancient Greek traditions and the worship of these Greek gods reminded the worshippers of their cultural roots. People gave thanks to these gods for the literal “resurrection” of the city. There were many inexpensive votive figurines found in the excavations of Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore,<sup>435</sup> showing that the worshippers were probably relatively poor and descendants of the inhabitants who originally lived in Corinth before 146 B.C.

Thus, worship in the temples of this category seems to be closely related to family gatherings for the reverence of ancestors and thanksgiving for certain kinds of material provisions. Although the Roman government intended to significantly downsize the scale of these previous Greek temples for Romanisation, they were still very popular and well-received especially by the poor non-Roman peasants in Corinth. The popularity of the traditional Greek binary gods Demeter and Kore (Demeter as mother, Kore as daughter) in Roman Corinth after 44 B.C. is demonstrated in the icons of the coins found in the first century:

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<sup>434</sup> Cf. Christine M. Thomas, “Greek Heritage in Roman Corinth and Ephesos: Hybrid Identities and Strategies of Display in the Material Record of Traditional Mediterranean Religions,” in *Corinth in Context*, 117-47. [pp.137-9]

<sup>435</sup> Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 106.

Of the thirty-seven coins in these two categories...twenty-five belong to the period before *ca.* A.D. 50. This distribution may reflect a revival of the Sanctuary [of Demeter and Kore] not too long after the refounding of Corinth.<sup>436</sup>

Family gatherings usually took the form of eating meals in the temple of Demeter and Kore. According to the following archaeological findings of Corinth in the first century, banquets probably took place in the temple after worshipping idols:

Some vessels are suitable for pouring...and might have been used for libations. The association of many thin-walled wares and Corinthian wheel-made lamps...might suggest libations and lamp-lighting as rituals at the entrance of the Sanctuary, but even if so, the practice appears to have been discontinued after the 1<sup>st</sup> century. The cooking pots, which are mostly large, have all been used, suggesting that cooking took place in the Roman Sanctuary, and thus the fine-ware plates and the less numerous cups are probably just what they appear to be, vessels for eating meals prepared in the Sanctuary and for drinking.<sup>437</sup>

The common cooking pots and plates found in the temple of Demeter and Kore indicate that it was common to have family or social gatherings in the temple after their worship of idols. Although the old cult dining room was abandoned after the reestablishment of Roman Corinth in 44 BC, a new refurbished dining room was rebuilt in the temple. Therefore, it was still

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<sup>436</sup> Nancy Bookidis and Ronald S. Stroud, *Corinth, Results of the Excavations Conducted by The American School of Classical Studies at Athens vol. 18.3. The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore : Topography and Architecture* (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1997), 435.

<sup>437</sup> Kathleen Warner Slane, *Corinth, Results of the Excavations Conducted by The American School of Classical Studies at Athens vol. 18.2. The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: the Roman Pottery and lamps* (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1990), 6.

possible to have meals together for family gatherings after their temple worship or during some religious festivals even in the Roman period.<sup>438</sup> As the binary goddess Demeter and Kore are in mother-daughter relation, it is an icon which is perfect to stand for family ties, especially parent-child relations.

Besides the social function of consolidating family relationships between generations, this category of gods also promised protection and security to the whole city. Poseidon offered peace from the storms of the seas; Aphrodite, reproduction and protection of babies; Demeter and Kore, the provision of good food supply in the harvest; Asklepios, the restoration from physical illness. People in general regarded these Greek gods as their benefactors for their daily provision and health. There was an inscription found in Ephesus in the imperial period which was the thanksgiving prayers of two men to Artemis.<sup>439</sup> Another inscription expressed the same thanksgiving attitude to Asklepios: "To Asklepios, the savior of the world; Marcus Aurelius Caecilius Junior, son of Caecilius, [made a] thank-offering for his recovery."<sup>440</sup> Even in private letters, we find similar expressions of thankfulness for the providence of gods: "With the help of the gods our sister has taken a turn for the better, and our brother Harpocraton is safe and well: for the gods of our fathers help us at all times, giving us health

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<sup>438</sup> For the various modifications of this traditional Greek cult done by Roman domination, see Nancy Bookidis, "The Sanctuaries of Corinth," in *Corinth, Results of the Excavations Conducted by The American School of Classical Studies at Athens vol. 20: Corinth, the Centenary: 1896-1996* (Charles K. Williams II and Nancy Bookidis ed.; Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2003), 247-259. [p.257] It shows that Fotopoulos' arguments against the possibility of Corinthian Christians attending eating meals in this temple are unsound. For Fotopoulos' arguments, see Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth*, 88-92.

<sup>439</sup> G.H.R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity, vol. 4: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1979* (North Ryde, N.S.W.: Macquarie University, Ancient History Documentary Research Center: 1987), 127.

<sup>440</sup> Georgi Mihailov ed., *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria Repertae*, vol. 1, *Inscriptiones orae Ponti Euxini* (2d ed.; Sofia: Academia Litterarum Bulgarica, 1970), 86.



and safety.”<sup>441</sup> Although the latter two are probably literary evidence from the third century, they witness that people in the Graeco-Roman world in general had a thanksgiving attitude to gods for their daily provisions, protections and healings.<sup>442</sup>

Based on the above evidence, it is reasonable to deduce that there may have been frequent thanksgiving meals taking place in the temples of these idols in Paul’s day. Whenever their friends (e.g. fishermen or merchants) come back from sea safely (thanks to Poseidon), whenever they celebrated a new-born baby resulting from their petitions to the goddess Aphrodite, or an instance of a recovery of physical illness of their friends or family (thanks to Asklepios), the Corinthians would be invited to attend their friends’ thanksgiving dinner in these temples. These were joyful parties to share the joy of the hosts because of the protection, blessing and healings granted from these gods.

Fotopoulos’ detailed historical study shows that eating in the Temple of Asklepios is a plausible context for 1 Cor 8:10. People eating in the dining room of this temple were highly visible because it was built on the hill and it was an outdoor place within the temple precinct. When people ate in this dining room, they were easily noticed by others. Therefore, “Christians who might have been seen eating meals in the dining rooms at the Asklepieion would have certainly been considered to be eating in an idol’s temple.”<sup>443</sup> Moreover, he has pointed out the dilemma for Corinthian Christians in rejecting the invitation of friends and families to attend meals in this temple of a healing god. “If Corinthian Christians were invited

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<sup>441</sup> P.Oxy. 935 (A. S. Hunt and C. C. Edgar, *Select Papyri* [LCL; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932] 1:343)

<sup>442</sup> James B. Rives also shows that it was common for people in the Graeco-Roman world to invoke gods for various daily needs and practical advice. See James B. Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 89-104.

<sup>443</sup> Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth*, 67.

to a thanksgiving meal by their pagan family members, patrons...because of a recent healing it would have been difficult to refuse the invitation without giving offense.”<sup>444</sup>

From my own study of this first category of gods in Roman Corinth, Corinthian Christians encountered similar dilemmas from invitations to thanksgiving meals in other temples of this category of traditional Greek gods of daily provision and protection. Their rejection was regarded as disrespect against their ancestor tradition and, most important of all, it offended their own family kinship group unity and endangered close family ties.

### **5.5.2 Isthmian Gods: Civic Honour**

The second category is those gods related to Isthmian festivals. As they were mostly Greek gods, some overlap with the first category but the reasons for attending these meals were different. This is another civic identity marker of the Corinthians in the first century.

These temples included the shrine of Melikertes-Palaimon uncovered on the Isthmus and Poseidon.<sup>445</sup> Both were sea-gods and were closely associated with each other. Melikertes, a young man, became immortal after death and was transformed into the marine god Palaimon. The myth of this young boy and the relation of his death with the origin of Isthmus games are as follows:

The life of young Melikertes was abruptly ended when his mother leaped with him into the sea....Melikertes becomes the marine deity Palaimon, associated with Poseidon.

At the same time, a dolphin carries the dead boy's body to the Isthmus, where

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<sup>444</sup> Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth*, 70.

<sup>445</sup> Elizabeth R. Gebhard, "Rites for Melikertes-Palaimon in the Early Roman Corinthia," in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth*, 165-203. [p.166]

Sisyphus, ruler of Corinth, buries him and celebrates the first Isthmian Games at his funeral.<sup>446</sup>

Two years after Roman Corinth was rebuilt, in 42 B.C., the Isthmian games were restored and became a great event for the whole Roman Empire. They took place exclusively in Corinth, once every two years. Between 7 B.C. and 3 A.D., probably in the year 2 B.C., Corinth recovered her management and began to monopolise the running of this empire-wide festival.<sup>447</sup> Besides the sports contests, the games included music and literary competitions and chariot and horse races, attracting many tourists from the entire Roman world. This great event gave honour and prestige to the whole city but also a great burden of administration, comparable with the people of London who will share the honour as well as the administrative burden of the Olympics Games in 2012.<sup>448</sup>

Most Corinthians were supposed to be present at the opening ceremony to witness the results of the laborious work of preparation, and a few honourable people of the city were invited to participate in the idol meals afterwards. A cultic funeral rite took place in the temple of Melikertes-Palaimon as a re-enactment of the finding and burial of the body of the hero Melikertes, a lamentation was performed over the body followed by a funeral procession until it entered the tomb. At the end of this ritual, a bull was killed as a sacrifice to Melikertes-Palaimon and then all the invited guests participated in the meals.<sup>449</sup> The participants were honourable people who had made particular contributions to the city and

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<sup>446</sup> Gebhard, "Rites for Melikertes-Palaimon," 168-9.

<sup>447</sup> John Harvey Kent, *Corinth : Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens vol. 8.3. The Inscriptions 1926-1950* (Princeton : The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1966), 28. Other suggestions for the year of return of Isthmian Games are A.D. 43, 55 or 57. See Gebhard, "Rites for Melikertes-Palaimon," 185, n.76.

<sup>448</sup> Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 52. See also Gebhard, "Rites for Melikertes-Palaimon," 185.

<sup>449</sup> Gebhard, "Rites for Melikertes-Palaimon," 203.

earned a good reputation. Besides the rich people involved in the preparation, it was also possible to include retired Roman soldiers and the descendants of those freemen who had come to rebuild Corinth in 44 B.C. who might just be ordinary citizens of Corinth. This was another context in which Corinthian Christians would eat idol meals in the temple.

If Corinthian Christians were invited to this temple meal (once every two years), they faced an even more intense dilemma than the previous kind of temple dining. This temple dining strongly affirmed their civic identity and their presence brought honour to their family. The Isthmian games also expressed the pursuit of excellence and the pride of victory over other cities. If they rejected the invitation, many others would be eager to replace them and they may be no longer invited in the future. Their refusal would also be interpreted as a betrayal of their civic identity and a despising of those who gave them this opportunity. However, if they participated, they would be regarded as idol worshippers, for this kind of meal was far more explicit in honouring the idols than the thanksgiving parties of friends and family.

### **5.5.3 Imperial Cults and Greek Gods: Thankfulness to their Benefactor**

Besides being a significant commercial and tourist centre, Corinth was also a significant political centre, a Roman colony intentionally founded by Julius Caesar and the capital of the province of Achaëa with significant political value to the Roman Empire. The civic identity of a Corinthian was associated with their identity of “client” to their great patron Caesar.

The imperial cult was closely associated with the Caesarean Games and thanksgiving sacrifices. There were at least sixty-two inscriptions related to the imperial cult, a statue of Augustus, and an altar to the Divus Iulius found in ancient Corinth. Epigraphical references to

Julius Caesar and Augustus, and references to Caesarean games have also been discovered.<sup>450</sup>

The site of Temple E in the excavations of ancient Corinth might be associated with the imperial cult because a base was found there which was believed to be the base of a statue of Augustus located to the west of the Forum and situated in a city-centre location.<sup>451</sup> Communal dining took place in Rome and so it was assumed that communal dining would have also taken place in the theatres of Corinth or in Temple E.<sup>452</sup>

Another possible occasion for the imperial cult was in the temple of the doctor-god Asklepios which was renovated very early in the newly rebuilt Roman Corinth. Bronwen L. Wickkiser has pointed out the close affinity of this healing god with Julius Caesar and Augustus. Asklepios was a very popular figure in first century Roman culture and was associated with Augustus in myths: both were sons of the god Apollo. After her analysis of various myths about Asklepios, Wickkiser has made a remarkable observation on the healing power of Asklepios as a metaphor for Augustus's achievement:

In the wake of Actium, the medical skills of Asklepios would have served as the perfect metaphor for Augustus's skills at healing a state torn apart by decades of civil war....By resurrecting the sanctuary of Asklepios, the colonists were thus honoring not only

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<sup>450</sup> Nancy Bookidis, "Religion in Corinth: 146 B.C.E. to 100 C.E.," 156. For the epigraphical evidence (e.g. in coins and inscriptions), see Mary E. Hoskins Walbank, "Evidence for the Imperial Cult in Julio-Claudian Corinth," in *Subject and Ruler: The Cult of the Ruling Power in Classical Antiquity* (ed. Alastair Small; Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplement 17; Ann Arbor, Mich.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1996), 201-14.

<sup>451</sup> Walbank, "Evidence for the Imperial Cult in Julio-Claudian Corinth," 204-5. See also Margaret L. Laird, "The Emperor in a Roman Town: the Base of the Augustales in the Forum at Corinth," in *Corinth in Context*, 67-116. [pp.84-93]

<sup>452</sup> Nancy Bookidis, "Religion in Corinth: 146 B.C.E. to 100 C.E.," 158-9.

Asklepios but an extension also the founders of their city: Julius Caesar and, more immediately, Augustus.<sup>453</sup>

Thus, the Corinthians may have used the temple of Asklepios for cultic worship of Caesar.

The reasons for the boom of imperial cults are probably related to economic prosperity endowed by Caesar rather than political coercion. First of all, it was Julius Caesar who literally resurrected the city and Augustus Caesar who brought the era of *Pax Romana* (Roman peace) and many jobs and business opportunities were generated for freedman and merchants. An inscription found in Sardis in the first century is relevant as the history of Sardis was parallel to Roman Corinth. While Corinth was restored by Julius Caesar from ruins in 44 B.C., Sardis was restored by Caesar Tiberius after it had been destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 17. The inscription showed the thankfulness of the people of Sardis to Caesar Tiberius:

Tiberius (object) Caesar god Augustus, the *imperator*, uncle of Tiberius Claudius Germanicus Caesar Augustus, the *imperator*, and founder of the city and benefactor of the world, out of piety and thanksgiving did the people (subject) hallow, the superintendent of works being Tib[erious Claudius,] [son of Demetrius,] [from the Quirine (tribe), Apollophanes].<sup>454</sup>

Besides this first century inscription in Sardis, the discovery of a foundation coin in Corinth also reveals that people in Corinth regarded Caesar as the founder and benefactor of the colony:

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<sup>453</sup> Bronwen L. Wickkiser, "Asklepios in Greek and Roman Corinth," in *Corinth in Context*, 37-66. [p.60]

<sup>454</sup> E. A. Judge, "Thanksgiving to the Benefactor of the World, Tiberius Caesar," in *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity, vol. 9: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1986-87* (S.R. Llewelyn ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 22.

That the Corinthians regarded Julius Caesar as the founder of their colony...is made clear by the foundation coin issue, dated to 44-43 B.C., which has the laureate head of Caesar and the exceptionally full ethnic LAVS IULI CORINT—*Colonia Laus Iulia Corinthiensis*—on the obverse. [RPC 1116 = *Corinth VI 16*]<sup>455</sup>

In the light of this evidence, it is reasonable to assume Corinthians participated in imperial cults on a voluntary basis because they were mainly motivated by thankfulness to Caesar—their god of prosperity.

Secondly, like other big cities in Achaia,<sup>456</sup> Corinth maintained her privileged position granted by the emperor through the promotion of imperial cults. Making sacrifices to the emperor strengthened the “inter-city” competency of Corinth:

It was a wider projection of the old civic religion that expressed loyalty to the city’s gods and hence, would gain the city favour in their sight. Therefore, provincial capitals would want to be seen as especially zealous towards the emperor: it was through such capitals and their governors that the divine emperors came most closely in contact with the governed.<sup>457</sup>

As a result, imperial cults created prosperity, as running them was a profitable business and the Corinthians gained many benefits from the rebuilding and administration of the Roman government. Caesar granted them many material blessings through promotion of trade,

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<sup>455</sup> Walbank, “Evidence for the Imperial Cult in Julio-Claudian Corinth,” 201.

<sup>456</sup> “From the perspective of Achaia as a whole, all the province’s larger cities hosted the cult: Athens, Corinth, Nikopolis Patrai, Argos and Sparta, for example, accumulated many shrines and monuments to the emperor.” See Susan E. Alcock, *Graecia Capta: The Landscapes of Roman Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 181.

<sup>457</sup> Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 102.

tourism and empire-wide games designated to be run only in Corinth (e.g. Isthmian games). Not only the wealthy people and elites, but ordinary citizens benefited from the good infrastructure built by the Roman government. The water supply system was excellent in Corinth and facilitated a thriving bronze industry.<sup>458</sup> Ordinary people could find jobs in industry or earned easy money from visiting tourists and merchants.

Because of the material blessings endowed by Caesar, imperial cults were integrated into Corinthians' customs of honouring local deities by adding him as one more god of prosperity. As they were accustomed to giving thanks to local deities for their daily provision, Roman Caesar was appropriately regarded as a benefactor of the city. Therefore, like cults of local deities, imperial cults in Corinth seemed to be initiated by ordinary people from below rather than by political propaganda of the government. Caesar did not mind if people worshipped him as a god, provided due honour and submission from citizens were given to him.

The homogeneity of imperial cults and other civic cultic worship is confirmed by a recent socio-political study of imperial cults. Philip Harland has pointed out a challenge to the traditional view on ancient religion which resulted from recent research on imperial cults. Traditional view imposes modern concepts of mutual exclusiveness between private-public, religious-political, etc. to separate religion from economics in the Graeco-Roman world. Recent scholarly research on imperial cults, however, show that this was not the case in the ancient Mediterranean world, where one's religious life was public and permeated one's social,

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<sup>458</sup> Like Sheffield which has been famous for producing silver, Roman Corinth has been well-known for producing a unique metal Bronze Alloy. See Carol C. Mattusch, "Corinthian Bronze: Famous, but Elusive," in *Corinth: The Centenary 1896-1996*, 219-232. [p.219]



political and economic life.<sup>459</sup> Based on his own archaeological research, Philip Harland comes to a conclusion showing the similar nature of imperial cults and other civic cults:

Contrary to the traditional view, such practices [cultic honours for imperial gods] were not merely expressions of political loyalty. Rather, they were religious expressions in the same sense that one could speak of religious expressions toward the traditional gods, all of which were intertwined within social, political, and other dimensions of life in the polis.<sup>460</sup>

However, there is one limitation in this study: no evidence has been found to show that there were idol meals taking place in the cultic worship of Caesar in Corinth and no dining room was found in Temple E. It is known that imperial cults in first century Corinth were closely associated with the Caesarean games not by dining but by watching gladiatorial shows and other brutal games. However, as the nature of an imperial cult is strikingly similar to the cults of local deities, in terms of honouring them as benefactors, it is reasonable to deduce that there were certain kinds of cultic communal meals involved in the rituals of worshipping *Sebastoi* (gods of Caesar), possibly in the dining room of the temple of Asklepios to give thanks to Augustus who brought healing to the state. Another possibility is domestic dining in Corinthian homes.

It is not difficult to imagine the predicament Corinthian Christians faced if they refused to participate in imperial cultic meals. Not only did their new faith in Christ conflict with their ancestor practices, or ideology for social recognition and honour, it also entailed a threat against the material support of everyday life. They may not have faced any political

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<sup>459</sup> Philip A. Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 119-21.

<sup>460</sup> Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 123.

persecution, as non-participation in the imperial cult did not necessarily imply political disobedience, but they may have faced pressure from co-workers, their boss or their customers. They may have been blamed for loss of business in the coming year if they did not participate in worshipping the god of prosperity. However, if they participated, others would interpret it as an acknowledgement that Caesar was the greatest benefactor of their daily living, not God.

## **5.6 The Rhetorical Purposes of OT Allusions in 1 Cor 8-11:1**

Examining the relevance of eating idol meals to three aspects of their lives, namely, strengthening the solidarity of family members and thankfulness for their protection (local deities), social honour (Isthmian gods) and thankfulness for provision (imperial cults), may shed light on Paul's rhetorical purpose of echoes of Scripture in 1 Cor 8-11:1. In section 2.1.3, I have shown that there are intra-textual echoes of 4:18-5:2 in 8:1-3 through the three distinctive words *φυσιώω*, *ἀγάπη* and *γνώσις*. Reading 8:1-3 in the light of 4:18-5:2, 1 Cor 8-11:1 begins with intra-textual echoes which have prepared the readers to pay attention to his correction against their assumed evaluation of idol meals. It shows that Paul does not fight like a man beating the air (1 Cor 9:26). Similar to what he has done in 1 Cor 5-7, Paul proceeds to use the scriptures to address their core pre-converted values relating to civic identity and transforms them into the Christ-like civic identity of an eschatological people (1 Cor 10:11).

### **5.6.1 Against the Religiously Open Polytheistic Culture**

Deut 6:4 is the well-known *Shema* of the OT. It is the foundation of the first commandment of the Decalogue and so the Corinthian audience would have heard about it from Paul or Jewish Christians among them. Deut 6 is Moses' command to the second generation of Exodus people preparing to cross the river Jordan and enter the Promised Land (Deut 6:1).

When Paul alludes to Deut 6:4 in 1 Cor 8:4, he alludes to the whole chapter Deut 6 and achieves four rhetorical purposes.

The first is to establish the exclusive relationship between the Corinthian Christians and the Christian God. In the context of Deut 6:4, the theme of exclusiveness of the object of worship is dominant. Besides the oneness of God expressed in the Shema in Deut 6:4, the exclusive monotheistic faith is more explicitly expressed in Deut 6:13-14:

You should fear the Lord your God, worship him, be cleaved (κολληθήσῃ) to him and swear only in his name. You shall not proceed after other gods, from the gods of gentiles among you....

Paul has mentioned this picture of “being cleaved (ὁ κολλώμενος) to the Lord” to describe the believers’ faith in Christ in 1 Cor 6:17 in the context of sexual sin. Now it appears again in Deut 6:13. When the Corinthian Christians hear the echoed OT text Deut 6:4, it is likely to remind them of Paul’s previous teaching about marriage as sexually closed in 1 Cor 6:17-7:9. In the same way, their present object of faith and allegiance should also be one and not many.

Paul’s second rhetorical purpose is the setting of a boundary that differentiates the Christ-followers from the gentiles. This message, “not like the gentiles”, is clear if they note the phrase “[Do not follow other gods] from the gods of gentiles around you” (ἀπὸ τῶν θεῶν τῶν ἐθνῶν τῶν περικύκλῳ ὑμῶν) in Deut 6:14. Once you have been cleaved to the Lord your God, you should say goodbye to the gods and no longer follow the gods you worshipped in the past, those gods of your neighbours, and the “gentiles” around you in the city.

The above two messages converge to point to the unique object of worship in their new faith. This reminder of religious closure is counter-cultural. In the polytheistic culture

around the Corinthian Christians, worshipping Jesus Christ in their religious life was just like adding one more friend to Facebook for modern people. It created no difficulty for them to worship one more god. Rather it was difficult for them to “remove” previous gods from their worship list after they believed in Jesus Christ. However, this is what Paul wants them to know, the proper evaluation of worshipping other gods as idolatry according to 1 Cor 8:4: “we know that...”

The third rhetorical purpose of this Shema echo is to prepare for Paul’s teaching in 1 Cor 10. There are strikingly similar wordings between Deut 6:15-16 and 1 Cor 10:

for the LORD your God in the midst of you is a jealous God (θεὸς ζηλωτῆς), lest the Lord your God be kindled with anger against you and He may destroy you (ἐξολοθρεύσῃ) from the face of the earth. You should not tempt the Lord (οὐκ ἐκπειράσεις κύριον) your God, as you tempted Him in the temptation. (LXX Deut 6:15, 16)

Similar expressions of warnings against “provoking the Lord in jealousy (ἢ παραζηλοῦμεν τὸν κύριον)” (v.22), “test Christ (ἐκπειράζωμεν τὸν Χριστόν)” (v.9) and “being destroyed by the destroyer (ὀλοθρευτής)” (v.10) in 1 Cor 10 were already mentioned in Deut 6: 15, 16 respectively. This shows the implication of this confession of *Shema*: unfaithfulness to the Christian God is defined by their social lives that connote the meaning of “cleaving” to other gods. Moreover, right from the beginning of 1 Cor 8, Paul has reminded them of the importance of loving the Lord; in 1 Cor 8:3: he says this will result in being highly valued by God (be known by Him). Now the echoes of Deut 6 in 1 Cor 8:4 define the exclusive nature of this love: love God with ALL your heart and with ALL your strength (Deut 6:5). If this whole-hearted love is what Paul refers to in their relation to the Christian God, they should not

participate in any social activities that connote “being cleaved” to other gods, including attending idol meals. This is unloving towards God.

The fourth rhetorical purpose is to clarify what “knowledge” refers to in 8:7: “but not everyone has this knowledge.” It does not refer to the knowledge that “an idol is nothing at all in the world” in 8:4 but to the knowledge of the implication of the *Shema* confession: single-minded devotion to the Lord. Even though there are actually “many gods” and “many lords” (8:5), our faith is the same as Israel’s faith in the Lord: worship Him *alone*.<sup>461</sup> Not all possess this knowledge and some weak brothers do not. Even when they were having normal meals, they still recalled their participation in idol meals and did not know that this double-mindedness caused stains (μολύνεται) in their devotion to the Lord (8:7b). The weak group in the Christian community is thus defined here in 8:7: neophytes who still recalled the good memory of past idol meals and still missed the lives of idol-worship. This tendency to spiritual adultery was the characteristic of weak people who lacked the knowledge of their Christian faith as undivided devotion.<sup>462</sup>

Thus, contrary to the traditional view that regards Paul as taking a contradictory stance towards eating idol meals in 1 Cor 8 (morally neutral) and 1 Cor 10 (cardinal sin), the inter-textual echoes of Deut 6 shown above come to an opposite conclusion: Paul implicitly condemns eating idol meals as unloving to God and an expression of “being cleaved” to other

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<sup>461</sup> Both Paul and the Book of Deuteronomy do not deny the existence of gods behind idols nor their great impact to one’s life. For Deuteronomy, see Deut 32:16-17. For Paul, see 1 Cor 8:5b: “indeed there are many gods and many lords.”

<sup>462</sup> The phrase “not all possess this knowledge” in 8:7a refers but is not confined to the weak brother. In the next chapter, section 6.5.2, I will argue that this category “not all” includes knowers in 8:10a as well.

gods. This message can be perceived if the Corinthian audience hear the OT echoes in 1 Cor 8.<sup>463</sup> Later, Paul explicitly condemns idol meals in 1 Cor 10.

1 Cor 8:8 is often regarded as Paul's indifferent attitude towards eating idol meals. Alex Cheung, however, has made an observation on 1 Cor 8:8 that deserves attention:

Granted that food does not commend one to God, there is *no benefit in eating* idol food and *no disadvantage in abstention*: 'We are no worse off if we do not eat and no better off if we do' (8.8). Such a way of stating the issue does not indicate indifference. On the contrary, it makes clear where Paul's sympathy really lies: *do not eat!*<sup>464</sup>

Maybe Cheung's conclusion "do not eat" pushes the rhetoric too far. However, he does point out that 1 Cor 8:8 is actually a *double discouragement* of Paul against eating idol meals. This is contrary to the notion of Paul's indifference towards idol food.<sup>465</sup> In addition to my previous analysis of Paul's rhetorical purposes in echoing Deut 6 in 1 Cor 8:4, the notion of Paul's indifferent stance towards idol meals is rendered unconvincing; he consistently discourages Corinthian Christians from eating them.

## 5.6.2 Taking Care of Your Weak Brothers

Although there is no direct scriptural echo found in 1 Cor 8:9-13, it is a direct application of the Shema echoed in 1 Cor 8:4 to a real occasion stated in 8:10a: some knowers in the church reclined [at a dinner table] in an idol's temple. First Corinthians 8:9-13 and Deut 6 share a

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<sup>463</sup> In the next chapter, we will inquire into the rhetorical purpose of the Lord's language for identity formation in 8:6. Even though the audience overlooks the echoes of the scriptures, they will also probably receive the same message of condemning eating idol meals from the Christ language.

<sup>464</sup> Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 134.

<sup>465</sup> For Cheung's arguments against Paul's neutral stance of eating idol food, see Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 133-7. Fitzmyer has also rebuked against interpreting 1 Cor 8-10 in light of Rom 14-15:13 and regarding eating idol food as morally neutral as eating unclean food for gentiles. Paul addresses the issue of eating idol meat in 1 Cor 8 and 10:1—11:1 while he addresses the issue of eating Jewish unclean food in Romans 14—15:13. See Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 333-4.

dominant theme of being accountable for one's whole household abiding in the exclusive worship of God. Paul seems to transform the kinship family loyalty to Yahweh in Deut 6 to the brotherhood family loyalty of the church to God in 1 Cor 8:9-13. Thus, it is indirectly related to the echo of Deut 6.

According to Fotopoulos' socio-historical study mentioned in section 5.5.1, a plausible historical context of 8:10a is that the idol meals took place in the temple of Asklepios, where they were closely related to family or friends' gatherings. Reading 8:9-13 in the light of this historical context, it is clear why Paul uses kinship language here.

The term "brother" (ἀδελφός) is repeated four times in 8:11-13. In previous occurrences in 1 Cor (1:1, 10-11, 26; 2:1; 3:1; 4:6; 5:11; 6:5; 6:6, 8; 7:12, 14-15, 24, 29), it always stands for the identity of a church insider, but in 8:11-13, it conveys additional meanings. Paul emphasises that the weak person is his own brother by calling him twice "*my* brother" (τὸν ἀδελφόν μου).<sup>466</sup> Moreover, 8:13 is a paradigmatic "I" statement which is Paul's paraenetic style and functions rhetorically, so that "the readers/hearers are to appropriate as their own."<sup>467</sup> When the Corinthian audience identify themselves with Paul in 8:13, they realise what he implies: he is *your* brother.<sup>468</sup> This is the additional meaning of the "brother" language Paul conveys to the knowers, i.e. the weak are not rivals of the knowers nor offended by their actions; rather, the weak brother is a follower of the knowers. The relation of the knowers and the weak is similar to the relation of an eldest son to his younger brothers in a

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<sup>466</sup> Some western MSS omit the possessive pronoun "μου" in both instances but it is present in the earliest textual manuscripts.

<sup>467</sup> Brian J. Dodd, "Paul's Paradigmatic 'I' and 1 Corinthians 6.12," *JSNT* 59 (1996): 39-58. [p.45] It introduces the long rhetorical 'I' questions of Paul in 1 Cor 9 to the right use of one's "rights." For similar paraenetic style of Paul's 'I' statements, see 1 Cor 4:6, 6:12, 14:18-19.

<sup>468</sup> Thus, it is appropriate to translate τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς as your brothers in 8:12, although the possessive pronoun "your" is absent in Greek.

family. When the weak saw the knowers reclining in an idol's temple, their conscience would be encouraged to eat idol meals. If the knowers hear the echoes of Deut 6 in 1 Cor 8:4 concerning watching over the allegiance to Yahweh of family members, they will further understand the responsibility Paul has cast on them: watch over your brothers in Christ who still miss their pre-converted idolatrous lives.

Paul uses a verb "[will be] encouraged" in 8:10b which is identical with the verb "edifies" in 8:1 (*οἰκοδομέω*). It exists only in these two verses in 1 Cor 8 throughout the whole of 1 Corinthians. It is thus natural for the knowers to recall Paul's introductory remark in 8:1 when they read 8:10b. However, it conveys diametrically opposite meanings in these two contexts. In 8:1 it is regarded as a positive term; in 8:10b, it is an inducement of the weak to commit idolatry. The knowers themselves may also share the same destiny because they lose the love of God among insiders (8:1). What is the status of these insiders when Paul calls the weak "fallen" (8:11, 13) and the knowers "sin against Christ" (8:12)? As 1 Cor 8 is closely related with 1 Cor 5, it is already implicit for Paul to treat both the knowers and the weak the same as the errant Christian in 1 Cor 5 as apostates of Christ. In the light of 1 Cor 5:1-2 and 8:1, 8:10b is interpreted as follows:

According to your knowledge—your evaluation from social values (8:11), you may evaluate your attendance at idol meals as family gatherings. However, it is wrong for it will result in the "encouragement" of your weak brother going astray from Christ. It results in his destruction.<sup>469</sup> This is exactly what you have done towards the errant Christian in 1 Cor 5:1-2: your sin-embracing attitude encourages the errant Christian to retain his incestuous relation.

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<sup>469</sup> Paul emphasises their destruction by putting the verb "destroy" at the first place of the Greek sentence 8:11: "Destroyed—the brother by your knowledge."



In sum, the point Paul intends to make in 8:9-13 for the knowers is apparent: For the sake of watching over the faith of your brothers in the church, do not attend social meals in the temple.<sup>470</sup>

### 5.6.3 Justifying Paul's Own Rights

From the outset, the biblical quotation of Deut 25:4 in 1 Cor 9:9 seems to be an arbitrary proof text: how can the law about the ox be interpreted as scripture written for us (ἡμᾶς γὰρ ἐγράφη) and how can we come to the conclusion that “whoever ploughs should plough in hope and whoever threshes should thresh in hope of a share in the crop?” (1 Cor 9:10) In other words, Paul takes a figurative reading of Deut 25:4. Is there any justification from the context of Deut 25:4?

Richard Hays argues for the legitimacy of Paul's figurative reading of Deut 25:4 based on the context of Deut 25:

This is often cited as an example of arbitrary proof texting on Paul's part, but closer observation demonstrates a more complex hermeneutical strategy at play here. First of all, Paul is operating with an explicitly stated hermeneutical principle that God is really concerned about human beings, not oxen, and that the text should be read accordingly (vv. 9-10). Second....The surrounding laws in Deuteronomy 24 and 25 (especially Deut. 24:6-7, 10-22; 25:13) almost all serve to promote dignity and justice for human beings; the one verse about the threshing ox sits oddly in this context. It is not surprising that Paul would have read this verse also as suggesting something about justice in human economic affairs. Third, once one allows the figurative reading of Deuteronomy 25:4, it functions as an elegant metaphor for just the point that Paul wants to make: the ox being driven around and around the threshing floor should not

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<sup>470</sup> Cf. E. Coye Still, III, “Paul's Aims Regarding εἰδωλόθυτα: A New Proposal for Interpreting 1 Corinthians 8:1—11:1,” *NovT* 44.4 (2002): 333-43. Based on different arguments, Still has concluded that “Paul's argument in 1 Cor 8:7—9:27 appears to have the purpose of persuading the knowers toward complete non-use of their right in the matter of food offered to idols.” (p.337) See Still, “Paul's Aims Regarding εἰδωλόθυτα,” 337-9.

be cruelly restrained from eating the food that his own labor is making available. Since he is doing the work, the ox should be allowed to eat; so, too, with apostles.<sup>471</sup>

Hays has pointed out a parallel subtext between the context of Deut 25:4 and 1 Cor 9:9: giving one what he is due. This is the meaning of rights (ἐξουσία) Paul repeats many times in 9:4-12.

Before 9:9, there is a series of rhetorical questions and each implies an affirmative answer (vv.4-8). 9:9-10 is the implicit answer of his previous rhetorical questions: yes, I and my co-workers do have rights to gain financial support from you. Paul continues to use the strategy of “I” statements starting from 8:13 to invite the audience, especially the knowers, to identify with him. Paul uses the series of long rhetorical questions with “I” and “we” in 9:1-10 to articulate the expectation of the rights of the knowers: we knowers deserve some freedom in our own family lives (9:4-5) and a fair reward of social honour from our commitment in the society. Even this scripture bespeaks this (9:6-10).

Therefore, this is the first instance of Paul’s rhetorical purpose of quoting the OT in 1 Cor 5-11:1 that affirms the common social values of the audience. There is no counter-cultural tone here in Paul’s rhetorical purpose of using Deut 25:4.<sup>472</sup>

Yet, this is *not* the point Paul intends to make. His main thesis in 1 Cor 9 begins with 9:12b. Paul forfeits his rights and freedom that he deserves from the Corinthian church. His final stand is counter-cultural but he depends on the echoes of Jesus’ saying in 9:14 instead of the scriptures. The next chapter will investigate the relationship between Paul’s counter-cultural stance and Christ language.

#### **5.6.4 Against Eating Isthmian Meals**

There are already numerous excellent monographs and research papers giving detailed study of the OT allusions and how they shed light on the interpretation of 10:1-22.<sup>473</sup> As I have

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<sup>471</sup> Richard Hays, *First Corinthians*, 151.

<sup>472</sup> The context of the scriptures Isa 28:24, 28 echoed in 1 Cor 9:10c portrays similar theme of the justice of God.

<sup>473</sup> Meeks, “ ‘And Rose Up to Play’: Midrash and Paraenesis in 1 Corinthians 10:1-22”; Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 91-94, 97-102; James M. Scott, “Paul’s Use of Deuteronomistic Tradition”; Peter S. Enns, “The ‘Moveable Well’ in 1 Cor 10:4: An Extrabiblical Tradition in an Apostolic Text”; Cheung, *Idol Food in*

shown in the diagram in section 5.4, there are numerous OT texts resonated in 1 Cor 10:1-13. Scholars usually go into details such as investigating the controlling subtext behind Paul's thought in 10:1-13, the comparison of Paul's use of the scriptures with the use of the scriptures in the Jewish literature or the subtle change of the scriptures by Paul.<sup>474</sup> Yet, they all come to a general consensus that Paul is giving serious warnings to the Corinthian Christians of their danger of falling from salvation to damnation. I deem it convincing and this is the main rhetorical purpose of Paul using the OT here.

In addition to this main rhetorical purpose, *I propose that another key rhetorical purpose Paul has for using the OT in 10:1-22 is his condemnation of Isthmian meals.*

First, the description of the classic Exodus story of Israel by Paul in 10:1-11 is highlighted as a story of tragedy. It should be noted that Paul does not intend the readers to recall specific scriptures to interpret the discourse here because there are numerous OT texts retelling this story. It is difficult for the readers to identify one and exclude others except one instance: the direct quotation of Exod 32:6 in 10:7.

In my mind, Paul is actually using the grand narrative of ancient Israel to *create a picture of a journey from resurrected life to death*: the journey which begins with new life emancipated from Egypt (10:1) but end up in physical death in the wilderness (10:5). 10:1-4 was the celebration of the Exodus of Israel from Egypt, crossing the Red Sea and experiencing God's supernatural provision in the wilderness. Their future was supposed to be rosy and bright. Yet, the turning point was 10:5 which stated explicitly the destiny of the first

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*Corinth*, 144-152; Oropeza, *Paul and Apostasy*, 67-222; Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 156-171; James Ageson, "Written Also for Our Sake."

<sup>474</sup> One representative study about Paul's subtle change of OT quotation is 1 Cor 10:8, where Paul changes the number 24000 in Num 25:9 into 23000. See my discussion in p.249, n.419.

generation of Exodus Israelites: they all died and their bodies were strewn in the wilderness. Paul then states clearly in 10:11b his figurative reading of the wilderness journey of ancient Israelites echoed in 10:6-11 which stands for the spiritual journey of some baptised Christians who can end up falling (πίπτω in 10:12). Thus, Paul identifies a possible destiny of Corinthian Christians with their “fathers,” ancient Israel.

When the Corinthian audience listened to this well-known story of the failure of Israel in the wilderness, they would not necessarily recall certain specific OT texts because this story and the Israelites’ failure had been retold many times in the OT. Rather, they were likely to recall the strikingly similar process of the cultic ritual of procession to the tomb of Melikertes. When Paul mentions the runner’s race in 9:24-27, the audience is likely to associate his metaphor with the Isthmian or Olympic games, both great sports events in the Pan-Hellenistic world. However, only the Isthmian games began with a funeral ritual that re-enacted the death of the young god Melikertes as mentioned in section 5.5.2. Then the Isthmian game began which signified the apotheosis of the deceased youth, now alive, immortal and metaphorically “resurrected” through every athlete participating in the race.

In retelling the Exodus story, Paul reverses the order of this ritual: portraying a picture of a sports competition (9:24) and the “resurrection” of ancient Israel first from Egypt (10:1) but their journey ending in the tomb of the wilderness (10:5), an exact reverse parallel of the rite of the re-enactment of the finding and burial of the body of Melikertes in the Isthmian idol meal: instead of victory and honour, this rite will actually bring them failure in pleasing God and so they will end up in the tomb (10:5).

Secondly, the clear OT quotation of Exod 32:6 in 10:7 functions as a literary sign to the audience about the rite of Melikertes. The process of the sacrifice in this cultic ritual is as follows:

The ritual, if it followed the usual pattern for heroic cult, would have taken place at night. The priest would have begun with a prayer inviting the hero to join the feast and blood-offering, the dirge would have followed, and the image of the hero on its bier of pines would have been carried to the place of sacrifice. After offering a black bull, the participants would have dined. The ceremony may have begun at Melikertes' altar, which marked the place where his body was found on the shore (Pausanias 2.1.3).<sup>475</sup>

The process is strikingly similar to the sacrificial meal of the golden calf event depicted by Paul. When he mentioned the ancient Israelites worshipping the golden calf in 10:7, Paul described the event with quoted scripture: “sat down to eat and drink and rose up to dance.” (Exod 32:6b) Right before that, Exod 32:6a said that Aaron offered a whole burnt-offering and peace-offering. It thus meant that Aaron had properly killed an unblemished calf as a sacrifice to Yahweh and then the Israelites came around to eat the calf and celebrate (Lev. 1:3-5; 3:1-5).<sup>476</sup> Moreover, according to Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, the verb “play” (παίζω) in 10:7b can mean celebration or “to play, sport, jest.” This depiction of the golden calf event by Paul is strikingly similar to the process of “killing the black bull” in the sacrificial rite of Melikertes. All participators ate the bull in their meals afterwards and then celebrated with the Isthmian games, chariot race and music competition. This constituted the “play” after the ritualistic meal.

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<sup>475</sup> Gebhard, “Rites for Melikertes-Palaimon,” 177-8. The ritual took place in Greek Corinth before 146 B.C. In this article, Gebhard has shown from his archaeological research that the similar rite was restored after 44 B.C. in Roman era at the opening of Isthmian games. See Gebhard, “Rites for Melikertes-Palaimon,” 178-203.

<sup>476</sup> Whole burnt-offering and peace-offering in OT can also refer to sacrifices of sheep or birds. See Lev 1:10-17; 3:6-17. However, as the ancient Israelites had made an image of golden calf to stand for Yahweh, it is reasonable for the Corinthian audience to presume that they were eating calf.

Once the audience identified the similar scenarios of eating idol meals of Melikertes and the golden calf event, they would hear clearly Paul's condemnation: all participants are idolaters (10:7a) and they cannot inherit the kingdom of God (6:9).

Richard Phua has found the notion of "one God, many names" in Diaspora Judaism which may explain the rationale for the Corinthian Christians in participating in this apparently idolatrous worship ritual. He found support for this notion in the *Letter of Aristeas* 16, 19 and 42. For instance, in *Let. Aris.* 16: "the God who is overseer and creator of all things whom they (the Jews) worship is he whom all humanity worship, but we, O king, call differently as Zeus and Dis." It shows that "[T]he God of the Jews is not only being universalised in this statement, but more significantly, he is being made as not quite unique since the Greeks are said to address him with different names."<sup>477</sup> Phua then deduces that some Corinthian audiences may hold a similar rationale of "one God, many names" to justify their participation in idol meals which include cultic worship of idols: even though we participate in the worship to idols, we can still regard in our hearts that it is worship to our God. Applying this rationale to the idol meals of Melikertes, their justification is apparent: even though the outsiders celebrate the apotheosis of Melikertes, it can be counted as a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Even so, Paul's identifying of the rite of Melikertes with the golden calf event is sufficient to condemn their position as idolatry because the golden calf stands for Yahweh himself (Exod 32:4-5), not other gods. Aaron and the Israelites committed idolatry because they made an image of Yahweh and broke the second commandment. Similarly, even though the

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<sup>477</sup> Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 99. Phua argues that this is one possible Jewish parallel of the "strong's" position in 1 Cor 8-10: one God but many names. See Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 96-115.

Corinthian Christians took Melikertes as Jesus Christ or God the Father, they committed idolatry as “their fathers”(10:1) did in the golden calf event.<sup>478</sup>

Then in 10:15-22, Paul continues to address the fallacies of “many names, but one God.” The echoes of Deut 32:17, Psa 95:5, Isa 65:11 and Bar 4:7 in 10:20-21 state the same fact: the food sacrifices to idols are actually sacrifices to demons which are real beings totally different from the one God. As I have shown in chapter 3, Belial stands for a betrayer of God; he had worked under the rule of God but now he betrayed Him. He often worked within the insiders who had made a covenant with God and led them astray to become apostate. The Corinthian audience may not have known the details and origin of Belial, but at least they will figure out from Deut 32, Psa 95, Isaiah 65 or Bar 4 echoed in 10:20-21 that demons are enemies of God. Paul always uses the term idols or gods to designate the object of worship related to idol meals before 10:20 and only when he comes to 10:20-21 does he change the designation to demons. When Paul changes the subject from idol (10:19) to demons (10:20-21), they would at least grasp the message that idols or gods can no longer stand for God to whom they confess as an object of faith (8:4). The demons that stand behind the idols are real entities which are totally distinct from God. Once the audience knew that there is another totally different being other than God involved in idol worship, the “many names/idols, one God” theory totally breaks down. From their common understanding of the social dimension of temple meals, the audience would immediately figure out that their participation in the

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<sup>478</sup> There may even be various versions of monotheistic beliefs in the non-Jewish Roman world such as “One God, many subordinate gods as His agents.” See representative articles collected in Stephen Mitchell and Peter van Nuffelen ed., *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For detailed discussion about the notion of “pagan monotheism” in the interpretation of 1 Cor 5-11:1, see next chapter section 6.5.1 of this study.

process of altar worship and the temple meals was an act of betrayal, fellowship and alliance with other gods (10:18) who were enemies of God revealed in Scripture.

Resisting these Isthmian meals could be very difficult and was a trial for Corinthian Christians who craved the social honour they deserved from their contributions to society. Thus, the promise of 10:13 standing between two long discourses of serious warnings against Isthmian idol meals is the key: God is faithful. In the light of the context of Deut 32:4 echoed in the phrase “God is faithful” in 10:13, God is both the faithful Father who punishes His children who sin against Him (Deut 32:5) and yet the same faithful Father who makes and establishes his people (Deut 32:6).

In conclusion, Paul’s rhetorical purpose of OT echoes in 10:1-22 mainly addresses the issue of attending Isthmian idol meals with a resolute prohibition, although the principles can be applied to other kinds of idol meals.

### **5.6.5 Christ as the Only Benefactor of Insiders**

Scholars have generally assumed that 10:26-31, as well as 1 Cor 8:8, is support for Paul’s stance of indifference regarding eating idol meals. This biblical quotation, LXX Ps 23:1 quoted in 10:26, lies at the middle of 10:25-27. It is generally assumed that it is a justification of Christian freedom on eating: ALL meat bought in the market is legitimate for ALL Christians to eat.<sup>479</sup> John Paul Heil’s view is representative of this conventional understanding:

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<sup>479</sup> Barrett, *The First Epistle to Corinthians*, 240; H. J. Eckstein, *Der Begriff Syneidesis bei Paulus: eine Neutestamentlich-exegetische Untersuchung zum "Gewissensbegriff"* (WUNT 2.10; Tübingen: Mohr, 1983), 256-76; Fee, *The First Epistle to Corinthians*, 480-2. Both Barrett and Fee argue from 10:25-26 that Paul’s emphasis on freedom of eating here has made a sharp break with Judaism and this notion is influential to subsequent commentaries; Hays, *First Corinthians*, 174-6; Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, 142-3; Thiselton, *The First Epistle to Corinthians*, 785-6; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 399-400. Raymond Collins



Because everything sold in the market has been created by God, it is part of the earth's "fullness" that belongs to God and thus is ultimately under the sovereignty of God's lordship. Even if it has previously been sacrificed to idols, anyone in Paul's audience may freely and unquestioningly eat it.<sup>480</sup>

10:26 functions as an expression of a morally-neutral stance of Paul on eating idol meals and is a support for Christian freedom on eating any food.

However, this interpretation creates a tension between 10:25-27 and Paul's previous long warnings against idol meals in 10:1-22. Moreover, if Paul intends to express a morally-neutral stance on eating an idol meal, how can the unfriendly rejection in 10:28 be an act for the sake of the unbeliever? If the moral consciousness of the unbeliever means that he deems the eating of idol meals by Christians as immoral, this subsequent rejection by his Christian friend will just confirm the unbeliever's thought instead of conveying a neutral stance towards Christians eating idol meals. On the other hand, if the unbeliever deems eating them as morally neutral for Christians, then Paul would have agreed with him and so there is no reason for Paul or other Christians to reject eating the food after knowing its idolatrous origin. In sum, the notion that Paul expresses his indifference towards eating idol meals in 10:25-30 creates more exegetical problems than it solves.

I propose that the answer lies in the context of LXX Ps 23 and that it should be read in the light of the historical context of thanksgiving meals to idols. Ps 23 is not just a hymn of praise

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and David Garland are exceptional commentators who notice the ongoing rhetoric of limitations against Christian freedom. See Collins, *First Corinthians*, 386; Garland, 489-92.

<sup>480</sup> John Paul Heil, *The Rhetorical Role of Scripture in 1 Corinthians*, 165. See also Heil's comprehensive summary of commentators and monographs in n.15 of p.165-6 which stresses the license of eating any food as Paul's rhetorical purpose of quoting Ps 23:1.

about creation but also a well-known Psalm of the royal Messiah which emphasises the reverence of people to him instead of his freedom granted to us. After the acknowledgement of the ownership and Lordship of God over all things in this world, Ps 23:3-4 reminds the Israelites of the requirements for entering into his holy place to worship him: innocent hands and clean hearts. The Lord is the King of glory. He is the real king who will come victoriously into the city on the hill (Ps 23:7-10). The whole context of Ps 23 is a depiction of a King who owns all the things of the world and is coming to the city on the hill. It warns *all* people to make proper preparation to welcome his royal presence.

By linking this context of the deeply reverent attitude in Ps 23 to the present context, the biblical quotation in 10:26 is not in support of a morally-neutral stance towards eating idol meals nor a justification for Christian freedom. Like the previous long discourse on the tragedy of the Israelites, this biblical quotation warns the Corinthians against offending God in attending social meals and urges the Corinthians to hold a reverent attitude to the Lord in eating. Paul's rhetorical purpose of quoting Ps 23:1 in 1 Cor 10:26 is to differentiate idol meals from normal social meals: *The definition of idol meal does not lie at the origin of the food but rather lies at the attitude of the receiver/eater.* As Ps 23:5 says,

He shall receive blessing (εὐλογίαν) from the Lord and almsgiving (ἐλεημοσύνην) from God our saviour.

When this general truth is applied to the daily meals of an insider, the meal becomes an "almsgiving" of Christ. Therefore, no matter where it comes from, either bought from the market or shared by one's unbelieving friend, it should be received with thankfulness to the Lord, for *everything* is from the Lord. This *all* in 10:26 reminds the audience about the modified *Shema* confession in 1 Cor 8:6:

for us there is one God, the Father, *from whom* are ALL things and from whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, *through whom* are ALL things and *through whom* we exist.

There is a conjunction γὰρ at the beginning of 10:26. Its synthetical function is to explain why it is not necessary for insiders to inquire about the origin of the food in the marketplace (v.25) or in the social banquet (v.27) because God is the patron even to unbelievers according to quoted scripture Ps 23:1. It is he and he alone who is the benefactor of all humanity, including the unbelieving host who holds the banquet.

However, when the unbeliever announces that this food is ἐφόθυτόν—meat that has been offered to certain gods, the nature of the social meal changes immediately. According to the study of social meanings of idol meals in section 5.5.1 and 5.5.3, people in general regarded their Greek gods and Caesar as their patrons. They gave thanks to these gods for their provision through inviting family members and friends to have meals together in the temple. When the meal is announced by the unbelieving host as ἐφόθυτόν in his home, the food is acknowledged as a blessing and almsgiving of the gods, *not* of the Lord. Socially speaking, the social meal immediately becomes an idol meal because it is regarded by the host as grace from idols, not from the creator God.<sup>481</sup> This meaning remains the same whether it takes place in the house or in a temple. People can worship gods in every corner of their house. While his host's conscience judges that it is right to attribute to his gods the provision of food in the banquet, the believer should show that it is wrong by *not* eating the meal, for the Lord is the

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<sup>481</sup> It does not matter whether the informant in v.28 is identical with the unbelieving host in v.27. If someone in the banquet announces anything publicly about the nature of the banquet, he is speaking for the host to make this announcement.

only patron of the peoples of the world.<sup>482</sup> This is the meaning of Paul in vv.28b-29a: “do not eat it because of the informant and his conscience. I mean his conscience, not yours.”

If the insiders “you” (v.28) continue to participate in the idol meal even after the host acknowledges it as a blessing of idols, the insiders implicitly deny the truth revealed in Ps 23:1 that all are blessed and supplied from the Lord. Socially speaking, all eaters evaluate the food as provision from the gods the host acknowledges in his announcement. This acknowledgement of various patrons is not a problem to polytheistic worshippers who can acknowledge that food is given both by my gods *and* your gods but does constitute a cardinal sin of blasphemy against the monotheistic Christian faith.

John M. G. Barclay, through associating 10:25-31 with 10:20-21, comes to a similar conclusion that Paul’s concern here is not Christian freedom but the orientation of thankfulness:

To be more specific, what concerns Paul is what we might call the *orientation* of the food and of its consumption. If food is regarded, and eaten, in orientation to *daimonia*, it cannot be oriented to God, and thus what comes from God and belongs to him (‘the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it’) is blasphemously redirected away from God to something or someone other. This is why Paul finishes the discussion of this delicate matter by insisting that it is permissible to eat any food, so long as one can do so *with thanksgiving (eucharistia)*: ‘whatever you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to

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<sup>482</sup> Some later MSS, Chrysostom and the *Textus Receptus* add Ps 23:1b again between 10:28 and 10:29. It further confirms that some early churches share my interpretation of 10:26: do not eat it because the announcement “this food is sacrificial meat” in 10:28 contradicts Christian confession expressed in 10:26.

the glory of God' (1 Cor 10.30-31). The act of thanksgiving – saying 'grace', which means just that – orients the food back to the giver, and orients the eaters likewise.<sup>483</sup>

Thus, I argue that 10:25-27 bespeaks Paul's continuous warning: a Christ-follower should give thanks for his food only to the Lord no matter where it comes from (bought from the market or from social meals offered by unbelievers). This is the point Paul intends to make by quoting Ps 23:1 in the middle of 10:25-27. The repeated "all" in 10:25-27 actually points to the *only* object of thanksgiving of Christ-followers. Paul emphasises that one's dining manner should manifest one's identity as a client to his only patron Christ. Christ-followers should not eat the meal right after it is announced as a blessing from an idol because at least one eater (the host) has oriented the food to a giver other than the one God Christ-followers confess. According to 10:20-21, this social banquet becomes a table of demons for the host, one of the eaters, has oriented the honour of patronage to the demons. This rejection is a rebuke against the unbeliever's conscience—his credit to another god as the giver of the food.

If a brother or sister keeps on participating after it has been announced as a sacrificial meal, there are two possibilities:

a) The brother or sister does not say thanks to the Lord. The unbelieving host will think that he or she also agrees that his gods are the benefactors which mean one's Christian liberty is determined by the evaluation of the unbeliever. This misleading "silence" of thanksgiving to the Christian God is challenged by Paul's rhetorical question in 10:29b: your Christian liberty is evaluated by the unbeliever as acknowledgement of the patronage of his gods. As a result, it

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<sup>483</sup> John M. G. Barclay, "Food, Christian Identity and Global Warming: A Pauline Call for a Christian Food Taboo," *ExpTim* 121.12 (2010): 585-93. [p.588]

violates the purpose of Christian liberty in eating and drinking: only for the glory of God (10:31).

b) The brother or sister says thanks to the Lord, clarifying that the sacrificed meat is blessed and given exclusively by the Lord. Then he/she is likely to be denounced by the unbelieving host, for it contradicts his acknowledgement of the patronage of his gods. In this case, it is challenged by Paul's rhetorical question in 10:30: your eating after saying thanks to the Lord cannot change the mind of the unbeliever but is rather blasphemed by the host. This participation is still regarded by the unbeliever as a reception of grace from his gods. Again, this eating and drinking cannot glorify God (10:31).

Thus, for the sake of the conscience of the unbeliever—his evaluation that the meal is a blessing of his gods, one should not eat the idol meal if one confesses God as the only patron of all peoples. This rejection is another application of 10:20-21: non-participation in the “takeaway” table of demons in an unbeliever's house.

Like the previous cases of rejection of attending family gatherings in the temple and the privileged Isthmian meal, it definitely offends the friend who invites the Christians. However, Paul reminds them that it is better to be “blasphemed” (βλασφημοῦμαι) by your friend (10:30) than commit blasphemy against God, who is the only patron of everybody's economic life. Saying *no* to this patronage idol meal is an act of glorifying God in food and drink (10:31) and being blameless (ἀπρόσκοποι) to Jews or to Greeks or to the Church of God (10:32). This recalls the very nature of the Christian's love of God as characterized throughout 1 Cor 8—single-minded devotion to the Lord.

## 5.7 Conclusion

Marriage was commonly understood as sexually open and temporal in those times, but in 1 Cor 7:2-9 Paul redefines it as sexually closed and life-long by appealing to Gen 2:24. Although there is no OT allusion found in 1 Cor 7:2-9 besides Gen 2:24, there is a strong counter-cultural tone from the perspective of the audience. Under this new definition of marriage and sexual immorality, insiders are guarded from such immorality and marriage becomes a social identity marker of insiders. Their marital relationships –faithful, other-oriented, and life-long—create a clear distinction of insiders from outsiders. Paul encourages insiders to direct their sexual passion exclusively towards their own spouse.

1 Cor 8-11:1 cannot be understood as an isolated discourse from 1 Cor 5-7. Although 8:1 starts another topic on idol meals, there is a close relation between sexual immorality and idolatry both in Paul's thought world and in the social world of Corinthian Christians. Right at the beginning, Paul evokes 1 Cor 4:18-5:2 in 1 Cor 8:1-3 through the three distinctive words *φυσιώω*, *ἀγάπη* and *γνώσις* to prepare the readers to listen to his correction of their assumed evaluation of idol meals, meals which are inseparable from their social life and civic identity. There were mainly three categories of idols in Roman Corinth; all were related to various common unavoidable social activities: local deities which related to family gathering and daily needs provision, Isthmian gods which related to civic honour, and imperial cults which related to economic prosperity. The rhetorical purposes of OT echoes throughout 1 Cor 8-11:1 are counter-cultural (except 9:10). Paul evokes the context of the quoted or echoed scriptures consistently to teach against eating idol meals in any occasion and thus consuming the social values entailed from the surrounding polytheistic culture.

First Corinthians 8:4-9:18 addresses particularly the first category of idols. Paul quotes the Shema (Deut 6:4 quoted in 1 Cor 8:4) as a definition of love (wholehearted devotion to the

Lord) and uses intimate kinship language (my brother) to remind them of their responsibility of taking care of the “double-minded” faith commitment of their own weak brothers in Christ. It simultaneously reminds the weak brothers of the social implication of their confession in Christ: undivided devotion to the Lord. In 1 Cor 9:1-18, Paul continues to convince the knowers to give up their own rights for the sake of their weak brothers, even though their own rights are endorsed by the scripture (9:9).

First Corinthians 9:19-10:22 addresses their participation in the Isthmian meal. This meal includes the participation of cultic sacrifices to Melikertes. Paul carefully articulates a classic tragic story of the ancient Israelites which begins with liberty and victory but ends in death and failure. He uses Scripture to associate this kind of idol meal with a re-enactment of the golden calf event, showing that participating in this Isthmian meal is definitely idolatry and so Paul urges them to stop, or they will also end up falling from salvation and becoming apostate from Christ.

10:25-30 responds to the third or first category of idols, taking the idol meal as thanksgiving to the Greek gods /Caesar as benefactor. The rhetorical purpose of quoting LXX Ps 23:1 in 10:26 is not as a justification of Christian freedom but a warning to Christians against giving thanks to the wrong object. Once the food has been declared as scarified to idols, the friend’s table becomes an extended table of demons and the social private banquet also becomes an idol meal, even though it has not taken place in the temple. Psalm 23:1 functions as a defining criterion of the idol meal: when one of the eaters acknowledges it as blessing of the gods instead of the God Christians believe in, the social meal becomes an idol meal. The participation in this idol meal constitutes an act of idolatry because it violates the Christian confession that the Lord is the only patron of all peoples.



Throughout 1 Cor 8-11:1, Paul counteracts the polytheistic culture around the Corinthian church. There are *no* two opposing groups, “strong group” and “weak group” involved in the issue of eating idol meals, both were keen on attending idol meals, although with different reasons. Paul does not hold contradictory views on this issue: a morally neutral stance in 1 Cor 8 but a condemning attitude in 1 Cor 10, but consistently rebukes the eating of idol meals throughout 1 Cor 8-11:1.

In chapter 4 and 5, I have demonstrated how Paul indoctrinates new values to the audience that are contrary to the social conventions prevalent in the social ethos of the audience. The inter-textual echoes of Scripture reveal the radically different values that should be visible in the social lives of insiders: holiness in romantic relations, fairness in making judgment, undivided tenderness in marriage and faithfulness to God their only patron in social meals. All the above social relations and activities must demonstrate their group identity as insiders when they are compared with outsiders involved in the same social activities, otherwise the insiders will be in danger of apostasy and following the steps of Satan (5:5; 7:5; 10:20-21).

However, all the above boundary settings are not sufficient to define who insiders are. After all, not visiting prostitutes does not necessarily imply that a person is a Christ-follower. This comes to the core of identity formation of insiders: who are the insiders in their own terms? What are the sufficient criteria that characterise one as an insider? In the next chapter, I will investigate the rhetorical purpose of Christ language with reference to the identity formation of insiders in 1 Cor 5-11:1.

## Chapter 6

# Christ and the Christian Community: The Social Implications of Christ Language in 1 Cor 5-11:1

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In chapters 4 and 5, I have examined how Paul has used Scripture to draw the social boundary dividing the church from the world: insiders are not like the outsiders. Paul's allusion to Scripture creates a centrifugal force for the audience to detach themselves from the social ethos prevalent in the world as well as in their pre-converted past. In this chapter, an insider-outsider relation with reference to the Christ language (Christ / Jesus / Lord<sup>484</sup>) will be explored to address the following questions: how does Paul self-categorise insiders in terms of Christ language? How will it be interpreted by the audience related to their ordinary social lives and assumed social values? Besides self-categorising insiders, what are the other rhetorical purposes of Paul when he uses Christ language in 1 Cor 5-11:1? Finally, by combining the Christ language with previous rhetorical purposes of OT echoes in the same discourse, it is hoped that they will shed light on our understanding of the logic and coherence of 1 Cor 5-11:1.

### 6.1 Christ Language at the Beginning of 1 Corinthians

#### 6.1.1 Paul, the Corinthian Church and their Relationship

Paul's own identity, the identity of the addressee (the community at Corinth) and the relationship between Paul and the church are all formulated in terms of Jesus Christ. In the whole of 1 Corinthians, the noun "Christ" appears most frequently at 1 Cor 1. Paul mentions

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<sup>484</sup> I have observed that the singular term "Lord" unambiguously refers to Jesus Christ throughout 1 Cor 5-11:1 : 5:4-5; 6:11, 13-14, 17; 7:10, 12, 17, 22, 25, 32, 34-45, 39; 8:6; 9:1-2, 5, 14; 10:21-22, 26. Thus, I include the term "Lord" in Christ language to analyse Paul's rhetorical purpose of using this term.

“Christ” seventeen times in 1 Cor 1, twelve times in the first thirteen verses alone. This shows that 1 Cor 1 (especially vv.1-12) contains the most frequent discourse about Christ in the whole epistle.<sup>485</sup>

Paul defines his own identity in terms of Jesus Christ: “apostle of Jesus Christ” in 1:1. His ministry of the gospel is also defined *exclusively* as the message of “Christ crucified” or the cross of Christ (1:17-18, 23; 2:1-2).

Besides defining Paul’s own identity, Paul also defines the identity of his addressees using Christ language. Paul defines the addressees in two ways: “being” and “action”. In terms of “being”, Paul defines them as the church of God, sanctified in Christ Jesus. As this phrase “in Christ Jesus” (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ) is placed between the phrase “in Corinth” (ἐν Κορίνθῳ) and “in every place” (ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ) in 1:2, the syntactical meaning of the dative phrase “in Christ Jesus” is probably locative: the addressees are referred to as a group of people literally situated within the same place of Christ. In terms of “action,” the key verb is “call”: the addressee is the community of people *called* to be saints, *called* to have fellowship with Jesus Christ (1:2, 9) and who, at the same time, *call* on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (1:2) in every place.<sup>486</sup> The last phrase indicates that Paul inherits the tradition in the OT to designate

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<sup>485</sup> “Christ” is also frequently mentioned in 1 Cor 15: fifteen times in 1 Cor 15 and fourteen times in 1 Cor 15:12-57 in the context of the resurrection of Christ. However, in terms of frequency, “Christ” is still *most* frequently mentioned in 1 Cor 1.

<sup>486</sup> The first phrase “called to be saints” (κλητοὶς ἁγίοις) exists only in 1 Cor 1:2 and Rom 1:7. We can take reference of Paul’s use of this phrase for identity formation in Romans. Kathy Ehrensperger argues that this phrase echoes the discourse of Lev. 19 and draws inspiring parallels between Rom 12-13 and Lev 19. As a result, Rom 12-13 can be read as Paul’s discourse of forming a holy identity for the Christ-following community. Moreover, it sheds new light on interpreting Rom 14:14, 20, where the emphasis of these two verses lay not upon the food, but the status of acceptance (holiness) of Gentile Christians. As a result, Paul does not abolish food laws per se in Rom 14-15, where food laws are originally taken by Jewish tradition as ritual laws only applicable to the Jews. See Kathy Ehrensperger,

the addressees as the people of God. Gordon Fee has observed the echoes of the phrase “call on the name of the Lord” in LXX Gen 4:26; 12:8; 13:4 and Joel 3:5. This is the distinguishing feature of the people of God in the OT. Now in 1 Cor 1:2, this characteristic of the people of God is applied to the addressees. Paul just changes the name of the Lord from “Yahweh” to Jesus Christ.<sup>487</sup> This definition of addressees as “being called by God” is further explained in other action terms with Christ language: *being given* τῇ δοθείσῃ (grace of God through Jesus Christ in 1:4) and *waiting* ἀπεκδεχόμενους (for the revealing of her Lord Jesus Christ in 1:7); the members *were baptised* only in the name of Christ and *boasts* only of Him (1:13, 31).<sup>488</sup>

The social implication of the Christ language to the addressees is aptly expressed by Stephen J. Chester:

[T]he self-understanding urged on them by Paul...replaced ethnicity with faith in Christ as the boundary which defined community. The alien other was no longer Jewish but unbelieving... For those who are in Christ, this fact is to be the fundamental boundary

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“ ‘Called to be saints’—the Identity-shaping Dimension of Paul’s Priestly Discourse in Romans,” in *Reading Paul in Context*, 90-109. [pp.101-109] In this study, I endeavour to explore the function of identity formation of other “called- phrases” in 1 Corinthians.

<sup>487</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), 127-9.

<sup>488</sup> After reaching my conclusion, I also notice that Adelheid Ruck-Schröder points out the significance of Joel 3:5 in understanding this phrase “call on the name of the Lord,” and Paul’s call for unity in utilizing it: the same community who calls on the same name. It is similar to Paul’s strategy in Rom 10:6-13 and Phil 2:11. See Adelheid Ruck-Schröder, *Der Name Gottes und der Name Jesu: Eine neutestamentliche Studie* (WMANT 80; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1999), 73-5.

of their social world, not the fact that some are slaves and some masters. The alien other are the unbelieving, not those of a different social status.<sup>489</sup>

Thus, the Corinthian church is a new social group formed by a new criterion that transcends racial or social status: you belong to Christ (3:23).

Besides providing the identity of the author Paul and that of the addressee Corinthian church, the name of Christ is also a key word for defining the relationship between author and addressee. Paul is the father of the Corinthian church because of Jesus Christ (4:15). She should imitate Paul as Paul imitates Christ (4:16-17; 11:1).

In sum, the identity of Paul, the church and their mutual relationships are all defined by Christ language in 1 Corinthians.

### 6.1.2 Church-Israel and Church-Society Relations

Concerning the relation of the Corinthian church with other groups, “Christ” in 1 Cor 1 functions as a bridge: Christ connects the church with ancient Israel and the social world outside the church.

Mark Finney, from his observation on the extensive use of “call” in 1 Corinthians, has pointed out the intimate relationship *between the church and ancient Israel*:

The extensive use of both *kalein* (to call) and *ekklesia* in 1 Corinthians is probably no accident (the verb occurs 15 times and the noun 22 times, each figure representing

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<sup>489</sup> Stephen J. Chester, *Conversion at Corinth: Perspectives on Conversion in Paul's Theology and the Corinthian Church* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 111-2. See also Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 242-3: “...in Paul's view there is no necessary correlation between one's position in the hierarchy of society and one's position in the hierarchy of the church, between the material scale on which one is able to make provision, and the degree of honour which one is to be accorded.”

half of the respective occurrences in the genuine letters). It is the call of God, proclaimed through the apostle in the form of an offer of reconciliation (cf. 2 Cor 5:19–20), that has established the Corinthian *ekklesia*—an assembly which can be understood only in relation to God himself, for it represents his new creation and delineates the very matrix of his people....he was building a multi-ethnic *ekklesia* which would stand as an alternative society rooted in the history of Israel, in stark opposition to the *pax Romana* (Roman peace).<sup>490</sup>

Thus, if the church is the people of God who call on the name of Jesus Christ, strikingly identical to the Israelites who called on the name of Yahweh, Christ is then the object of worship and the covenant Lord of the church members. The key that marks insiders from outsiders is Jesus Christ: we belong to Christ while outsiders do not. This is a self-categorising element of the church.

One implication of the church rooted in the history of ancient Israel is that the church becomes a religious voluntary association distinct from other existing religious voluntary associations in the Mediterranean world. Because of the monotheistic and exclusive nature of the Jewish religious tradition, the church, which inherits this similar religious tradition, entails the exclusive nature of its membership: Corinthians cannot be members of other religious associations once they have voluntarily joined into the membership of the church. Paul's catchy phrase "in Christ" has created a strong centripetal force for the community of Christ-followers. It results in the solidarity of the Christian community and guidance for proper behaviours of insiders and the exclusive nature of the membership. It is summarised well in Chester's words:

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<sup>490</sup> Mark T. Finney, "Christ Crucified and the Inversion of Roman Imperial Ideology in 1 Corinthians," *BTB* 35.1 (2005): 20-33. [pp.27b-28a]

The ties that bind those within the church to each other are to be stronger than the ties between themselves and any outside.... 'How would this action affect my relationship with God?' and 'How would this action affect my relationship with my brothers and sisters in Christ?' become crucial and connected questions in assessing the appropriateness of behaviour. Thus Paul's concept of calling yields the building blocks of a new practical consciousness, and, as it does so, both separates and joins. Irrespective of who or what they have been, those called to be saints are separated from their own pasts, but included in a new future; separated from those who do not share their calling, but joined to those who do.<sup>491</sup>

On the other hand, as the church is metaphorically located inside Jesus Christ (just as the phrase "in Christ" connotes a similar meaning of "in Corinth" and "in every place" in 1:2), *Christ is then the link between the church and the outside world.* He is the boundary but at the same time the connecting point of insiders and outsiders. Insiders were not called out of the world but called to be saints. Similar to the city of Corinth which is not an isolated island but a city connecting east and west of the Roman Empire, the church "in Christ" signifies the social location of the church and the society. Church is not sectarian in the sense that insiders maintain minimal social intercourse with outsiders.<sup>492</sup> On the contrary, this "in Christ" characteristic becomes a strong motive for insiders to maintain the existing social ties

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<sup>491</sup> Chester, *Conversion at Corinth*, 112. For a supplement view of Chester's conversion, see Wayne Coppins, "To Eat or Not to Eat Meat? Conversion, Bodily Practice, and the Relationship between Formal Worship and Everyday Life in the Anthropology of Religion and 1 Corinthians 8:7," *BTB* 41.2 (2011): 84-91. [pp.89-90]

<sup>492</sup> For instance, 1 Cor 5:9-10, 7:16, 10:27 and 14:16, 23-25 indicate that Paul assumes ongoing social intercourse of insiders with outsiders as well as the participation of outsiders in the worship of the Christian community.

and even to take initiative to contact outsiders for Christ. Therefore, Christ is an in-between element that characterises the interaction of insiders and outsiders of the church.

## 6.2 Christ Language in 1 Cor 5: A Milestone of New Lives

Jesus Christ is explicitly mentioned in 5:3-5 and 5:7-8.

In 5:3-5, the reference “Lord Jesus” repeats twice in 5:4 and “Lord” once in 5:5. It appears in the form of two phrases in 5:4: “by the name (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι) of our Lord Jesus” and “with the power (σὺν τῇ δυνάμει) of our Lord Jesus.” Both phrases are in dative cases. The first phrase is a further exposition of the action ἤδη κέκρικα in 5:3b. Thus it means that Paul himself should appeal to the name of Jesus to pass judgment on this brother. Paul and the church function as an agent or messenger who announces the verdict of Jesus, not the personal opinion of Paul or the church leaders.<sup>493</sup> The second phrase further expounds the legitimacy of Paul in making this judgment of the church even though he is now not present with the Corinthian congregation. It also foretells the action that should be taken with regard to the errant brother in 5:5. “The power” in the second phrase refers to the authority of the Lord Jesus delegated to Paul (with the church) that enables them to carry out the execution. Paul, together with the Corinthian church, functions as an authorised agent to carry out the execution.<sup>494</sup>

Thus, the two dative cases in the phrases “by the name” and “with the power” in 5:4 emphasise the instrumental role of Paul and the Corinthian church. *The insiders are agents of Jesus to announce and carry out the judgment of Jesus against the errant insider.* As Paul

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<sup>493</sup> The ensuing phrase συναχθέντων ὑμῶν καὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ πνεύματος indicates the solidarity of Paul and the Corinthian Christianity community for making this judgment in one accord.

<sup>494</sup> See Adelheid Ruck-Schröder, *Der Name Gottes und der Name Jesu*, 77-8. She emphasises that the power of the Lord is activated by the invocation of the church of the name of the Lord.



mentions the word “Jesus” twice and not “Christ” in 5:4, it is reasonable to assume that Paul refers to Jesus of Nazareth and not the concept of Messiah in the Old Testament.

In 5:7-8, on the other hand, Jesus Christ is depicted as the Paschal lamb. As I have argued in section 4.4.2, the leaven does not refer to the errant Christian but rather the sin-embracing attitude of the Corinthian Christians before they converted to Christ. Paul urges them to live out the new “batch” of sincerity and truth—the new unleavened bread (5:7a)—and get rid of the old leaven tolerating malice and wickedness (5:8). This sin-embracing attitude is not compatible with the new bread that the death of Christ creates. The death of Christ should arouse the active response of the Christian community against sinful insiders: executing social ostracism against them (5:11). This response shows the vitality of the church. Thus, the Christ language in 5:7-8 is to remind the readers of the distinctive characteristics of new lives in the Christian community—being responsive against sinning insiders.

There is an interesting parallel between the functions of Christ’s language in 5:3-5 and 5:7-8. In both cases, Christ is placed as a signifier in the discourse of creating a spatial-temporal change in the audience. After hearing 5:3-5, the audience would have depicted Paul being present with them to judge and execute the judgment. In 5:7-8, the audience is signified to go back to the past in Exod 12 / Deut 16. They will probably identify themselves with the ancient Israelites who celebrated the first Passover. In both cases, Christ signifies a new milestone in their spiritual journey.

### **6.3 Christ Language in 1 Cor 6: A Wake-up call for Critical Changes**

Paul mentions Christ explicitly in 6:11, 13, 15 and 17.

### 6.3.1 Christ as a Spiritual Location

In 6:11 Christ is mentioned in a similar phrase as in 5:4: ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Like the function of the “name of the Lord” in 5:4, it represents the presence of Jesus Christ

himself.<sup>495</sup> The phrase also invites the Corinthian Christians to recall a common memory

assumed by Paul in which Jesus Christ had been present: you were washed, sanctified and

justified. It probably refers to their baptismal experience.<sup>496</sup> Again, Christ language does

not focus on the introduction of Jesus Christ but signifies a milestone in entering into another

phase of life after the Corinthians believed in Christ. The conjunction “but” (ἀλλὰ) is

repeated thrice in v.11 which shows Paul’s emphasis of “no more.” Again, Paul’s rhetorical

weight lies on the phrase after the emphatic “but.”

The rhetorical purpose of Christ here is similar to that in 5:6-8. Christ serves as a

signpost to the spiritual journey of Corinthian Christians. Whether the common memory

stands for their baptism or not, “in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the spirit of our

God” refers to a critical moment of their faith journey. Christ stands between their old and

new religious lives and marks the boundary of critical change. Thus, Christ language here

seems to be locative similar to what “in Christ” signified in 1 Cor 1:2: like moving to a new

country, you are now spiritually moved to the realm of the Lord Jesus Christ and dwell in the

Spirit of our God. “Y...in the name of X” signifies that X is the king, patron or master of Y.

The personal possessive pronoun “our” (ἡμῶν) at the end of 6:11 further reveals the close

relation of the meaning of “in Christ” and their identity of insiders. Christ language reminds

the Corinthian Christians of their present spiritual location: being welcomed into Christ’s land.

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<sup>495</sup> Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther* 1: 434.

<sup>496</sup> Ruck-Schröder, *Der Name Gottes und der Name Jesu*, 78-9.

If we combine Paul's rhetorical purpose of echoing the OT in 6:1-11 with the rhetorical purpose of Christ language in 6:11, the thematic continuity of the litigation case in 6:1-9 with the surrounding context is more apparent. I have pointed out that one theme that links 1 Cor 5 and 6 is "insiders judging insiders" (section 4.5). The rhetorical purpose of echoes of the OT in 1 Cor 6:1-11 (the Book of Daniel and Deuteronomy) is an exhortation of the church to practise impartial justice (section 4.8.1). Church should model impartial justice to the outsiders. Now when Paul reminds them of the reality of their spiritual location in the reign of *our* Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of *our* God in 6:11,<sup>497</sup> he further substantiates the distinctiveness of making judgment through Christ language. The unjust favoritism (towards patrons and higher social status) is one common value they held before they were moved into Christ's land. They are reminded by thrice repeated ἀλλὰ in 6:11 that their only patron in their new lives is the Lord Jesus Christ. They should live only under his name, he who is their centre of honour. They should execute the impartial justice of the messianic king prophesied in Daniel 7 towards insiders and the prophesied messianic king is Jesus Christ.

### 6.3.2 Christ as the Eternal Home of Insiders

In 6:12-17, Christ language continues to function as a "friendly reminder" of two additional facts. First, it is a reminder of the final destination of their spiritual journey. The discourse in 6:15 actually starts from 6:12. When Paul utilizes Christ language from 6:13 onwards, he has led the readers into reconsidering the qualifications of being a judge towards insiders. Paul appeals to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the resurrection hope of the Christian community in 6:14. This theme of bodily resurrection of Christ and "us" becomes the axiom for Paul to further rebuke the wrongdoings of visiting prostitutes in 6:15. The close

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<sup>497</sup> According to the Greek sentence structure, the adjectival genitive ἡμῶν at the end of 6:11 probably describes both genitive nouns τοῦ κυρίου and τοῦ θεοῦ.

relation between the resurrection hope and the rebuke against visiting prostitutes is well illustrated by N. T. Wright:

Verse 14 is the key. The emphasis of the Greek, hard to bring out in English, is as crucial here as in chapter 15: the ‘both...and...’ joins together the resurrection of Jesus and that of believers, both of them accomplished (as usual in Paul) by the divine power (*dynamis*). Clearly Paul assumes that the body—the same body which can be abused in immoral behavior—is meant ‘for the lord’; this refers, it seems, (a) to the eventual union with the Messiah, anticipated in baptism, which will take place in the resurrection, and also (b) to the service to the Messiah which is supposed to take place (as in Romans 6.12-14; 12.1-2) during the present time....In particular, Paul suggests, on the basis of Genesis 2.24, that union with a prostitute is inappropriate because it links one’s ‘members’ with part of the pagan culture.<sup>498</sup>

This reminder of the bodily resurrection with Jesus Christ in his coming merges well with the scripture quoted in 6:16b: it defines the lasting effect of sexual intercourse and the mutual exclusiveness of “cleaving” with the prostitute (6:16) and “cleaving” with the Lord (6:17). These two cannot co-exist together. Sexual intercourse with the inappropriate person (prostitute, not wife) threatens the eventual union with Jesus Christ in the future resurrection, for it entails lasting scars to accompany one to the eternal home of the messianic king prophesied in Dan 7.

Besides reminding the readers of the final destination of their spiritual journey, another rhetorical function of Christ language in 6:12-17 is that Christ can replace the prostitutes. It

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<sup>498</sup> N.T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (vol.3 of *Christian Origins and the Question of God*; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 289.

should be noted that in 6:12-17 Christ language is repeatedly mentioned in contrast with immorality (πορνεία) or prostitute (πόρνης):

body NOT *for immorality*

BUT *for the Lord* (6:13);

body NOT as *members of prostitutes*

BUT *members of Christ* (6:15);

Becoming *one body with prostitute* by “cleaving” with her VS

becoming *one spirit with the Lord* by “cleaving” with him (6:16-17).

Through these repetitions of replacing prostitutes / sexual immorality with Christ / Lord in similar phrasal expressions, Paul seems to expect the audience to evoke the image of Christ whenever they encounter prostitutes in their social intercourse. After all, it may be the best strategy of “fleeing from sexual immorality” when one recalls the Lord in temptation. Thus, Christ language functions as a wake-up call for insiders when they are tempted to sexual immorality. This rhetorical function may be confirmed by the striking absence of Christ language in the ensuing pericope 7:2-7 when Paul encourages sexual intercourse with one’s spouse. Christ replaces sexual sin but never replaces licit sex with one’s spouse. Even devotion to prayer, without consent from your spouse, cannot be a justification for not having sexual intercourse with your spouse.

## **6.4 Christ Language in 1 Cor 7: New Social Lives**

Christ is explicitly mentioned only once in 7:22 but “Lord” permeates 1 Cor 7.

### 6.4.1 A New Definition of Marriage

In 1 Cor 7:10: I command, not I but the Lord (παραγγέλλω, οὐκ ἐγὼ ἀλλὰ ὁ κύριος), Paul's choice of the verb παραγγέλλω may indicate his emphasis on the command of Jesus Christ, for Paul only uses this verb παραγγέλλω here and in 1 Cor 11:17 which refers to the instructions of Jesus on the Lord's Supper (11:23).<sup>499</sup> The rhetorical purpose for the choice of word "Lord" is to strengthen the authority of Paul's teaching against divorce. The stress lies after the emphatic "but" (ἀλλὰ): the authority of the command against divorce rests on the Lord.

In section 5.1 I have shown that it is common for a Gentile woman to divorce her husband. For Diaspora Jews in the first century, they held a higher view of marriage and regarded it as a covenant before God. A Jewish marriage contract states the commitment of husband to wife. Similar to a will, the inheritance of a husband's property stated in the marriage contract becomes effective only after the husband passes away. There is no arrangement for divorce found in that Jewish marriage contract.<sup>500</sup> However, the Torah (Deut 24:1-4) clearly licenses men to initiate divorce under certain conditions. The Torah also allows women to initiate divorce if their husbands fail to fulfil the obligations of providing material and emotional support to them (Exod 21:10). In practice, Jewish women can even initiate divorce by asking a scribe or a male guardian to draft the divorce certificate for her.<sup>501</sup>

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<sup>499</sup> If the sayings of Jesus have already existed in written form before the Pauline letters, Paul's choice of this verb may further indicate his emphasis on the instructions of Jesus. It is because the subject of this verb is always referred to Jesus Christ in the gospels (Matt 10:5; 15:35; Mark 6:8; 8:6; Luke 5:14; 8:29, 56; 9:21).

<sup>500</sup> It is based on an unpublished Aramaic papyrus *P. Yad.* 10. See David Instone-Brewer, "1 Corinthians 7 in the Light of the Jewish Greek and Aramaic Marriage and Divorce Papyri," 230-4.

<sup>501</sup> It is based on an Aramaic Papyrus *Se'elim* 13 in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century which may be a divorce certificate issued by a scribe for Shelamzion to divorce her husband Eleazar. See David Instone-Brewer, "Jewish Women Divorcing their Husbands in Early Judaism: The Background to Papyrus Sie'elim 13," *HTR* 92.3 (1999): 349-57.[pp.349-50] However, it was not common for a Jewish woman to initiate divorce

James Crossley has pointed out evidence from Josephus' *Ant.* 15.259-60 that there was a Jewish woman Salome in the first century who broke the Jewish customs by initiating divorce against her husband.<sup>502</sup> It shows that it was still legitimate, though uncommon, for the first century Jewish women to divorce her husband under certain circumstances.

Therefore, Paul stands against divorce by appealing to the authoritative teaching of the Lord. This counter-cultural rhetoric explains why Paul addresses the divorced woman first to restore the marital relationship with her ex-husband (7:10) and then he makes a similar command to the married man (7:11b).<sup>503</sup> Later in 7:12, Paul changes the word order: I say, not the Lord (λέγω ἐγὼ οὐχ ὁ κύριος) but the command against divorce continues. It signifies only a change of the addressee rather than a change of position or authority. The phrase "not the Lord" can at most be regarded as Paul's declaration of his appeal to authority NOT from Jesus but from somewhere else.

Paul addresses his command to husband (v.11b) and wife (v.10) with almost the same wording: no divorce (μὴ χωρισθῆναι / ἀφιέναι). 7:11a states Paul's prohibition of remarriage (v.11a) and encouragement to a wife to restore her marital relation with her divorced husband. It should be noted that 7:10-12 addresses those who have been married. Moreover, 7:10 and 7:11a address the same group of people: married sisters. If a married sister is considering divorce, 7:10 is already applicable to her: no divorce and forsake this

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because she was responsible for proving that her husband had not fulfilled his responsibility of giving her material and emotional support.

<sup>502</sup> James G. Crossley, *The New Testament and Jewish Law: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T&T Clark International, 2010), 75.

<sup>503</sup> The symmetric pattern of 7:10-12 implies that 7:11 is also applicable to divorced husband: he should remain single or else be reconciled to his ex-wife.

thought *after* reading this letter.<sup>504</sup> Thus, in 7:11a, Paul is properly addressing those sisters who had already divorced. Paul urges these married but divorced sisters to remain single or be reconciled with their ex-husbands. Reading 7:10-12 in the light of the preceding context, there is a remarkable difference in Paul's mind between divorced sisters (7:11a) and unmarried sisters/widows (7:8). For the latter, there are cases in which they can marry; for the former, the only candidate for her remarriage is her former husband.

Furthermore, based on the aorist subjunctive mood of "separate" (*χωρισθῆναι*) in 7:11a, Paul states a general law applicable to all married couples. The instruction of remarrying only with one's former spouse is not confined to those who initiate divorce. It includes all who have been separated from their husbands. Therefore, it is also applicable to those who are abandoned by their spouse. This reading makes sense to the ensuing context about divorce, that even in the case of facing the "present crisis" (7:27) and being married to unbelievers (7:12-13), Paul still insists on saying *no* to divorce.

7:15 is often cited as an exception for remarriage: for those who have been abandoned by their spouse, they are free to remarry. This generally accepted interpretation has been rebuked by Will Deming.<sup>505</sup> My following observation on the rhetorical structure of *inclusio* substantiates Deming's interpretation. In 1 Corinthians, the verb *χωρίζω* first appears in 7:10 and its last occurrence is in 7:15a. Besides 7:10-15, *χωρίζω* does not exist in other places in 1 Corinthians. Thus, it is plausible to regard *χωρίζω* as a literary framing device to bracket Paul's teachings to mixed marriage in 7:10-15a. Thus, the verb *χωρίζω* in 7:15a draws the readers' attention to 7:10 which contrasts a Christian spouse with a non-believing spouse. *If*

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<sup>504</sup> The command "do not divorce" in 7:10 and 7:11b are particularly relevant to those insiders who are seriously considering divorce.

<sup>505</sup> See section 2.1.4.1 of this thesis.



*the non-believing spouse (outsider) initiates divorce, let him do so. But for us husbands or wives, we insiders do not divorce.* Thus, the indicative description of possibility of divorce of outsiders in v.15a (εἰ δὲ ὁ ἄπιστος χωρίζεται) actually reminds the audience of Paul's normative prohibition to insiders, that *we should not* divorce (παραγγέλλω...μὴ χωρισθῆναι) in v.10. The function of the *inclusio* of χωρίζω in 1 Cor 7:10 and 7:15a further confirms the notion of Will Deming that 7:15b is a fresh start of another new paragraph:

The brother or sister is not enslaved in these [brother-unbeliever marriage and sister-unbeliever marriage.] God has called you into [marital] peace.

For how do you know, wife, that you might save your husband;

or how do you know, husband, that you might save your wife? (1 Cor 7:15b-16)

Unlike the Jewish Law, Paul never gives license for Christians to divorce and remarry in any circumstance. Under Jewish Law, even the woman can initiate divorce when their spouse fails to fulfil marital obligation; under Paul's rule, no divorce.<sup>506</sup>

In conclusion, Paul's rhetorical purpose of Christ language (Lord) in 7:10-16 is simple: *No* divorce for married Christian whose spouse is still alive. Marriage is life-long union, no matter your spouse is believer or not; there is no remarriage for divorced brothers and sisters, no matter if they initiate it (7:11a) or they are abandoned by their spouse (7:15). The marriage remains intact in the Lord no matter what the couple has done. All of the above

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<sup>506</sup> Schrage comes to a similar conclusion that Paul is persuading insiders not to divorce in 7:15 through linking 7:15c (but God has called us into peace) with 7:12-14 and ensuring 7:16: the peace into which God calls the insiders is opposite to separation (cf. Luke 12:51). "Er ist erst recht nicht der individuelle Seelenfriede oder die abgeklärte Gemütsruhe, sondern zunächst der zwischenmenschliche Friede untereinander, der eben auch in Mischehen erreicht werden sollte, jedenfalls >>soviel an euch ist<< (Röm 12, 18)." See Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther*, 2: 110-2. [p.111]

indicate a great discrepancy between Paul's teaching about divorce, and both Scripture and the actual Jewish practice in Paul's time.

Paul's teaching against divorce is counter-cultural. It is the first time for Paul to appeal to the command of the Lord "not I, but the Lord" (7:10) and argue against the scriptures (the Torah) and the dominant Jewish interpretation of Scripture on divorce.<sup>507</sup>

### 6.4.2 New Patron-client Relation

Christ language is expressed in two phrases in 7:22: "freedman of the Lord" and "slave of Christ." It is in the midst of Paul's repeated instruction on "remaining in the social location when one is called" in vv.17-24. Paul mentions two sets of important social identities here: ethnic identity (Jews and Gentiles in vv.17-19) and social status (slave and freedman in vv.20-24).

First of all, the social status (slave and freedman in vv.20-24) is discussed. Based on the research of the social status of slaves and the patron-client social space in the first century, Dale Martin has observed that "[I]n such a patronal society, as long as the hearer understood that *Christ* signified the god-founder of the movement, the phrase *slave of Christ* would have carried...meanings not of humility but of authority and power."<sup>508</sup> When one is a slave of Christ, it connotes an honourable identity rather than a sense of humility (Cf. 1 Cor 1:31 "boast

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<sup>507</sup> There may be some alternative minority views in the Jewish literature against divorce and remarriage, for instance, CD-A 4.18-5.2 in the DSS and the school of Shammai. However, both are not dominant interpretations of the Hebrew bible within Judaism in the first century. Moreover, it is not sure if CD-A 4.18-5.2 is against polygamy or remarriage. Concerning the school of Shammai (a strict Jewish school), it allows divorce only due to unchastity but they accept remarriage afterwards. The teachings of the school of Shammai is different from Paul's prohibition against remarriage in 7:11.

<sup>508</sup> Dale B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 56.

in the Lord”). Not only does it indicate that Christ is his master, “slave of Christ” also represents the authority one possesses: he is the agent who exercises the power and authority of Christ. As far as freedmen in the ancient Mediterranean world are concerned, they usually establish a patron-client relation with an influential person based on a contract, giving one’s loyalty and service to the patron. The patron grants benefits and protection to the freedmen in return. Similar to a slave and master relation, a patron and client relation is also a vertical-dependency relation.<sup>509</sup>

Therefore, in 7:22, the metaphor “slave of Christ” (δοῦλός ἐστιν Χριστοῦ) is parallel to the metaphor “freedman of the Lord” (ἀπελεύθερος κυρίου ἐστίν). If one was a slave in the social world when one was called, the relation with Christ would be like the duty of a freedman to his/her patron, that is, he/she should show loyalty to the patron Lord. In contrast, if one was a freedman in the social world when one was called, one’s relation with Christ would be like the duty of a slave to his/her master, that is, he/she should live out his honourable identity as Christ’s agent. Paul’s emphasis does not lie in the different social status when one was called. Rather, Paul emphasises the same new social status in Christ: no matter whether one is a freedman or a slave, Christ should be one’s object of obedience and ground of boasting after one is converted to Christ.

If we put our feet into the shoes of the audience again, we will find how profound and subversive 1 Cor 7:22 is to their daily lives. In the ancient Graeco-Roman world, it was common for owners to demand sexual relations with their female slaves. In many cases, this demand was coercive. As I have mentioned in chapter 5, there was sexual entertainment for

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<sup>509</sup> Peter Lampe, “Paul, Patrons, and Clients,” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*, 488-523. [p.490] See also Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage Under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 1.

the guests during the social meals. It was likely that the female slaves (or young boys) of the host were required to be prostitutes to entertain the guests. On the other hand, some literary sources and inscriptions in the ancient world show that in certain circumstances, this demand was not necessarily coercive but tempting. Some female slaves were willing to accept this request in exchange for some privileged position and benefits in the master's family such as becoming a concubine of the master.<sup>510</sup>

If the audience is a female slave, 7:22 means that she should no longer be involved in sexual relations with her master. If such an illicit immoral relationship exists, she should cut off from it. No matter whether the sexual request is coercive or a tempting offer, her new identity of "freedman of the Lord" and the following phrase "you were bought with a price" mentioned in 7:22-23a function as an overt signal to remind her of Paul's previous warning against sexual immorality in 6:20: "You were bought with a price. Glorify God in your body." Paul's general statement "do not become slaves of men" in 7:23b then connotes a message of liberation to female slaves when they face sexual temptation in the workplace: you are no longer obligated to commit sexual sin with your master, because you have a new, honourable identity with Christ.

If the audience is a male slave or a freedman, this warning against sexually immoral requests from one's master / patron is also relevant. For it is also possible for a man to be sexually seduced or harassed by his master or patron's wife, as marriage is so sexually open and marriage fidelity is seldom put into practice in the culture at that time.<sup>511</sup> Brian Rosner

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<sup>510</sup> Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society*, 221.

<sup>511</sup> Graig A. Williams has pointed out a fact of "gender equality" in the ancient Roman world: "There was thus a long-established understanding among Roman men: a man's own male and female slaves were attractive and available sexual objects, and their use was one of the perquisites of ownership and of Roman manhood that would cause no eyebrows to rise in disapproval or surprise." See Graig A.

has pointed out the possibility that “Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 6:18a with *both* Test. Reuben 5:5 and Joseph’s example in mind.”<sup>512</sup> It is based on his observation of the parallels of the phrase “Shun immorality” and “Glorify God in your body” in 6:18-20 with *T. Reu.* 5:5 and *T. Jos.* 8:5.<sup>513</sup> Although the availability of Jewish Pseudepigrapha to the audience of 1 Corinthians is unknown, Rosner’s suggestion of recalling Joseph’s example is plausible. For it is not difficult for the male audience to evoke the famous story of Joseph in the Torah, where Joseph as a slave fled from the repeated sexual seduction of his master Potiphar’s wife. This scenario is relevant to the situation of the male slaves in the first century Mediterranean world. Though it was illegal according to the Roman Law and entailed shame to the married woman, such secret adulterous relations of a slave with his master’s wife, like Potiphar’s wife with Joseph, did exist in Roman families. For instance, in Tacitus’ *Annals* (6.40), there is a record that a married woman Aemila Lepida was accused of adultery with her slave and she finally committed suicide, probably being ashamed of exposure of the affairs.<sup>514</sup>

Therefore, Paul does not urge the slaves to seek manumission in 7:21-23, as David E. Garland suggests.<sup>515</sup> Paul appeals to the lordship and authority of Jesus Christ as their patron and master to urge them to live out their Christ-assigned lives in their workplace as slaves or freedmen. If they can gain freedom to avoid temptations of sexual immorality, they should make use of it (7:21).

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Williams, *Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 47-48.

<sup>512</sup> Rosner, *Paul, Scripture, and Ethics*, 140.

<sup>513</sup> Rosner, *Paul, Scripture, and Ethics*, 137-43.

<sup>514</sup> For this and other cases of women adultery with slaves, see Williams, *Roman Homosexuality*, 52. See also the praise of women adultery as a realization of romantic love shown in section 4.3.1 in this study.

<sup>515</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 312-4.

Concerning their ethnic identity (circumcised and uncircumcised in 7:18),<sup>516</sup> Paul gives similar instructions for living out the new life. Like the halakha in the Jewish tradition, Paul urges the Christ followers in 7:17 to “walk out” (περιπατέιτω) the new life that the Lord expects them to lead (ὡς ἐμέρισεν ὁ κύριος) in their social space when they were called (ἐκαστον ὡς κέκληκεν ὁ θεός). It is not necessary for the audience to change their ethnic identity to follow Christ. “The commandments of God” in 7:19 probably refer to the scriptures echoed in 1 Cor 5-6. Thus, 7:18-19 is interpreted as follows: abiding to the commandments of Yahweh<sup>517</sup> against sexual sin (Lev 18:8 in 1 Cor 5:1), other vices (5:11; 6:9-10) and injustice (Dan 7 and Deut 1 in 1 Cor 6:1-9) is more important than changing your ethnic status.

This understanding of 7:17-24 accords with Paul’s previous paraenesis about remaining in marital relationship with unbelieving spouses in 7:12-16. Now Paul continues with this theme and applies it in other areas of the social lives of Christians: obey the commandments of Yahweh (7:18-19) in social intercourse and obey your master or patron according to the will of the Lord in the workplace. Those who are in Christ are those who are bought with a high price by Christ their new master (7:21-24).<sup>518</sup>

In conclusion, Christ language in 7:17-24 aims at urging the audience to live out a counter-cultural life corresponding to their new patronage relation with Jesus Christ.

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<sup>516</sup> The term “circumcised” in 7:18-19 is better interpreted in its metaphorical rather than literal meaning. Otherwise, how can the circumcised be able to remove the marks of circumcision (7:18)?

<sup>517</sup> The term “God” is consistently used by Paul in 1 Corinthians to designate Yahweh in the Old Testament, especially in 1 Cor 5-7 (5:13; kingdom of God in 6:9-10; 6:11, 13, 14, 19, 20; 7:7, 15, 17). It indicates that “the commandments of God” in 7:19 should not be interpreted as the law of Christ. By taking the preceding context into consideration, it is better understood as moral instructions of the OT against vices mentioned in 1 Cor 5-6.

<sup>518</sup> A master is the one who pays the price to purchase a slave. As the audience are slaves of Christ, Christ is their master who is the subject implied in the passive voice construction in 6:20 and 7:23.

### 6.4.3 Disapproval of Mixed Marriage

Christ language appears in vv.25, 32, 34-35 and 39 and most frequently in vv.32-35. 7:32-35 is often regarded as Paul's preference for celibacy over marriage. From the outset, there is strong literary support for this. The pattern of v.32b-34 is listed below:

<sup>32</sup> ὁ ἄγαμος μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κυρίου, πῶς ἀρέσῃ τῷ κυρίῳ.

<sup>33</sup> ὁ δὲ γαμήσας μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κόσμου, πῶς ἀρέσῃ τῇ γυναικί,

<sup>34</sup> καὶ μεμέρισται. καὶ

ἡ γυνὴ ἢ ἄγαμος καὶ ἡ παρθένος μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κυρίου, ἵνα ᾗ ἁγία καὶ τῷ σώματι καὶ τῷ πνεύματι.

ἡ δὲ γαμήσασα μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κόσμου, πῶς ἀρέσῃ τῷ ἀνδρί.

Vv.32-33 is a contrast between an unmarried man and a married man, vv.34-35 an unmarried woman and a married woman.<sup>519</sup> In these two pairs of contrast, The "Lord" is set as a counterpart of one's spouse (vv.32-33) and the world (vv.34-35), no matter whether one is a married male or female. In sum, while an unmarried man or a woman can achieve undivided devotion to the Lord (v.35), the interests of married man or woman are divided as they are more concerned about the interests of the world and their spouse instead of Christ their Lord.

My question is: does Paul's view in vv.32-35 apply to marriage in general, in that marital relations definitely hinder one from undivided devotion to the Lord?

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<sup>519</sup> The subject "ἡ γυνὴ ἢ ἄγαμος καὶ ἡ παρθένος" in 7:34 probably refers to the same person rather than two women. It should be translated as "the unmarried woman, that is, the virgin" or "the chaste unmarried woman." It is because of the striking parallel symmetry of single man and single woman in vv.32-33 and vv.34-25. Moreover, this equal treatment of man and woman is prevalent throughout 1 Cor 7. For detailed exegetical arguments, see Allen R. Guenther, "One Woman or Two? 1 Corinthians 7:34," *BBR* 12.1 (2002): 33-45.

O. Larry Yarbrough has observed that there are discrepancies in Paul's teaching about marriage in 1 Cor 7:32-25 and his real life experience in the ministry. Paul does meet a number of devoted couples. There is a tension, if not contradictions, between Paul's commendation to the Christian couple Prisca and Aquila in Rom 16:3-5 and his preference for celibacy in 1 Cor 7. How can Paul claim that married couples are concerned with only pleasing one another and not the Lord (cf. 1 Cor 7:32-35) as he himself met a couple who "risked their neck" for his life and are his co-workers (Rom 16:4) ? Besides Prisca and Aquila, Yarbrough quotes other married couples like Andronicus and Junia (Rom 16:7), two couples in Rom 16:15 and apostles Cephas and Barnabas who are mentioned with their wives in 1 Cor 9:5.<sup>520</sup> These are ample counter examples in Acts and other Pauline letters which show that a married brother or sister can serve the Lord with undivided devotion with their spouse. How can we account for this apparent discrepancy?

Yarbrough's observation deserves our re-examination on the issue of celibacy in 7: 25-40. Yarbrough's own resolution to this apparent tension is this: "In real life, he [Paul] knew better."<sup>521</sup> Yarbrough's resolution implies that Paul's teaching about marriage does not take

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<sup>520</sup> O. Larry Yarbrough, "Paul, Marriage, and Divorce," 411-3, where he compares 1 Cor 7:32-35 and other Christian couples Paul met and mentioned in the Book of Acts and the Epistle to the Romans.

<sup>521</sup> Yarbrough, "Paul, Marriage, and Divorce," 413. Besides, Yarbrough's resolution includes adaptation of the polemic rhetoric proposed by Dale Martin to explain the discrepancy in 1 Cor 7, that marriage is one of the conflicts that divided the Corinthians into two groups along the fault line of social status: strong and weak group. In order to rebuke the strong who despised others lacking self-control, Paul confronts them in 1 Cor 7: 32-35 for "they were doing as much damage to the Corinthian body as porneia." See Yarbrough, "Paul, Marriage, and Divorce," 419-20. As I have shown in chapters 1 and 2 in this thesis, there is no slight evidence of division in the Corinthian church about marriage in 1 Cor 7. Be that as it may, that marriage is a controversial issue that divides the Corinthians, how can Paul's discouragement of marriage in 7:32-5 be regarded as a reproof against the strong who despise others lacking self-control? Paul's sayings in 7:32-5 would have accelerated their boasting and affirmed their superiority rather than function as a reproof against them.



real cases into consideration. However, it is unlikely that Paul does not consider the real life situation in his teachings about marriage in 1 Cor 7 as he has just addressed two real cases in the Corinthian church in 5:1 and 6:1.<sup>522</sup> In particular in 9:5, Paul knows other apostles, the blood brothers of the Lord and Cephas who accompany their believing wives (literally “sister wife”) to share the gospel.<sup>523</sup> It shows that Paul is aware that married couples can serve God with undivided devotion when he wrote 7:25-40.

Gordon Fee regards this pericope as Paul’s own personal opinion with regard to the specific situation of the Corinthians and is not meant to be normative to all Christians. He argues that Paul has stated clearly in v.25 and v.40 that this view is only his personal advice (γνώμη).<sup>524</sup> However, Fee’s interpretation has overlooked much of the context and the general principle that Paul continues to elaborate from 7:17: to remain in the social location when you are called. This is a general principle applied to all churches. Alistair Scott May has pointed out the significance of the parallel pattern of 7:12 and 7:25 which render Fee’s interpretation unconvincing:

The same formula-opening by conceding that there is no word of the Lord—is used in 7.12 and neither there nor here does Paul refrain from offering strong imperatives and arguments for his preferred option. That it is his own opinion does not prevent him

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<sup>522</sup> See also Paul’s appeal to the real case of practising baptism in Corinth to support his emphasis on preaching the gospel in 1:14-17.

<sup>523</sup> “...here is a very early Christian witness to the theme of Christian married couples travelling together for mutual companionship and vision in missionary or pastoral work, unless a specific decision is made to the contrary, or other circumstances prevail.” See Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 682.

<sup>524</sup> “[T]he issue itself lies in the category of concerns for which here are no commands of any kind, just advice or judgments (cf. v.40).” See Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 328.

stressing his authority to advise (7.25b) and then mustering every argument for that advice.<sup>525</sup>

Moreover, Raymond F. Collins has shown that in ancient rhetoric, the word γνώμη stresses the authority that demands obedience instead of giving “personal opinion”:

In rhetorical usage "opinion" was clearly distinct from merely personal opinion (doxa). The two terms, *gnōmē* and *doxa*, designated different kinds of rhetorical proof (see Rhet. ad Alex. 1430b.1-25; 1431b.9-15). The *gnōmē* was a concisely expressed principle or rule of conduct, the Latin *sententia*. As used by Thucydides and other Hellenistic authors *gnōmē* connotes a decision made with a certain degree of stick-to-itiveness, a proposal plus a commitment. Maxims formulating rules of conduct were so formulated as to be easily memorized in the schools. In rhetoric they served as a kind of proof.<sup>526</sup>

Therefore, like Paul's absolute prohibition against divorce from existing mixed marriage in 7:12, Paul is giving normative instructions in 7:25-40 which he expects the audience to follow.<sup>527</sup>

In my opinion, Yarbrough's observation is right but not his resolution. Paul's praise to the whole-hearted devotion of married couples like Prisca and Aquila can be interpreted in another way: *only when both husband and wife are devoted to pleasing the Lord can that*

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<sup>525</sup> May, *The Body for the Lord*, 240-1.

<sup>526</sup> Collins, *First Corinthians*, 289. Thus, the verb 'I think' (Νομίζω) in 7:26 does not connote any reservation but rather “explicates (hence οὖν, **accordingly, therefore**) the content of γνώμην in v.25.” See Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 572.

<sup>527</sup> Later I shall point out that there is another rhetorical purpose of Paul for making a parallel between v.25 and v.12.

*married couple be solely devoted to the Lord.* From this perspective, Paul's praise of Prisca and Aquila forcefully confirms what he said in v.33b and v.34b: as both husband and wife are determined to devote their lives in pleasing the Lord, pleasing one's spouse coincides with pleasing the Lord. One's interests are then not divided (7:34a). If, however, one spouse does not live for the Lord while the other does, his/her interests will be divided. Therefore, the so-called contradiction of Paul's attitude towards marriage in real life and in 1 Cor 7 does not exist if Paul's teachings in vv.25-40 are not addressed to marriage in general but are teachings addressed to a specific kind of marriage.

*I propose that 7:25-40 are Paul's teachings to young men and women in the church about the negative consequences for an insider to marry an outsider.* First, Paul states explicitly in v.25 that the following teachings are addressed to the virgins (τῶν παρθένων) which include unmarried single men, as evident in v.27: "are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free." Here Paul refers to a single man who has been engaged with a woman. Thus, virgins refer both to unmarried men and women, including those who have been engaged and those who have not. Secondly, the virgins (αἱ παρθένοι) probably refer to young men and women. For in the scripture, ἡ παρθένος refers to a young man or woman who is engaged (e.g. Deut 22:23; Amos 8:13; cf Luke 1:27 Mary who is engaged to Joseph is called virgin).

Thirdly, as I have shown above, "Lord" in v.32-34 is set as a counterpart of the world and one's spouse, no matter whether one is a married male or female. In other words, one's spouse and the world are treated as the same category by Paul. The "world" in 1 Corinthians is often referred to the social world outside the church, the people who do not know God or Jesus Christ. For instance, in 5:10, those immoral people of the "world" refer to outsiders in

the society perceived by insiders of the church.<sup>528</sup> In the immediate context in 7:31, the “form of the world” does not refer to the physical world but the way of life in the world, as pointed out by Louw-Nida:

In 1 Cor 7.31 *σχῆμα* does not refer to the physical form of the earth but to the way of life in the world. The reference is primarily to culture rather than to physical form. It is possible, therefore, to render this expression in 1 Cor 7.31 as ‘the way of life in this world is passing away.’<sup>529</sup>

Thus, the “world” in 7:31 refers to the everyday life in the society surrounding Christians.

Having clarified the meaning of the “world” as the social space outside the church, the nature of the marriage depicted in 7:32-34 is clear:

1. (unmarried man) being anxious and pleasing the Lord Vs

(married man) being anxious with the (outside) world and pleasing the wife. (vv.32-33)

2. (unmarried woman ) please the Lord Vs

(married woman) being anxious with the (outside) world and pleasing the husband.

(v.34)

*Paul is discussing the consequences of mixed marriage to Christian youths: when a young brother / sister marries an unbeliever.* The married man or woman is an insider. His/her

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<sup>528</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 1:20-21; 27-28; 2:12 ; 3:19; 4:9; 4:13; 6:2; 8:4; 11:32. The only possible exceptions are 1 Cor 3:12 and 14:10, where the word “world” seems to connote neutral meanings. For other texts quoted above, the word “world” refers to the social group in opposition to God or the society that does not acknowledge the lordship of God and Jesus Christ.

<sup>529</sup> Louw & Nida, *σχῆμα*, L&N 1: 586. See also *σχῆμα* in BDAG, 981, where *σχῆμα* in 1 Cor 7:31 is defined as “the functional aspect of something, *way of life*.”

acts of “pleasing his wife / her husband” belong to the activities of “being anxious for the world” (v.33, 34b). These acts are diametrically opposite to the acts of “being anxious for the Lord” and “pleasing the Lord” (v.32b, 34a). Therefore, the wife or husband of the insider is probably an unbeliever who belongs to the social sphere outside the church, i.e. outsider. This kind of mixed marriage has been addressed in 7:12-16 but it is related to those who are already married when they converted to Christ. Since divorce is not an option *after* marriage or even *after* engagement (7:27a), Paul reminds the single young brothers and sisters who still have marital freedom to consider seriously *before* they enter into marriage in vv.25-40.

Based on the above exegetical results, 7:25-34 can be briefly understood as follows:

I address the young unmarried men and women (τῶν παρθένων), including both those who have been engaged or not, for the following rule of conduct (γνώμη). It is good, I repeat “it is good” for emphasis, for you to remain in your unmarried status. If you are already engaged, it is not sinful for an unmarried man or woman to marry with an outsider, provided that there is no divorce afterwards. But the result is that you will properly face tribulations in the flesh—plausible life-long value conflicts with your unbelieving spouse. I encourage you to avoid these unnecessary tribulations (v.28). Because Jesus will be coming back at any time, it is not worth wasting time on these struggles (vv.29-31). I hope that you, young brothers and sisters, can be set free from the following dilemma (v.32): being anxious (μεριμνάω) about the Lord when you are single versus being anxious (μεριμνάω) about the world after you are married with an unbeliever (vv.33-34).

In order to avoid rebellion from these youths, Paul reminds them that these instructions are for their own good (v.35).

Paul sticks to the same issue against marriage to outsiders in vv.36-38. Paul applies his previous principle stated in 7:9. This time it is not applied to widows/widowers but to a young brother having a romantic relationship with a young unbelieving woman—the female virgin in v.36. Paul discourages him in vv.36-38 from keeping the relationship—unless you are not able to stand against temptation of committing sexual immorality, dissolve this romantic relationship with her. Paul never implies that he prefers a person to stay single for his or her whole life after coming to faith in Christ. Paul just says that being single is better than being married with an unbeliever.

Finally, Paul specifically gives instructions to a married sister (7:39-40) if her husband passes away. 7:39-40 is a summary statement of his previous teachings about mixed marriage. Based on the previous mutual applicability of of a married sister and brother, this summary statement applies to a married brother as well (7:39a is a counterpart of 7:27a). *7:39a reaffirms his radical stance against divorce from existing mixed marriage (7:12-16; see section 6.4.1): you are bound to your husband even though your husband is an unbeliever. This bond is life-long and “till death do us part.”*

There are two meanings we can derive from the Christ language in 7:39b-40. First, it summarizes Paul’s preference of Christian marriage over mixed marriage. As she is no longer bound to the marital relation, she is free to marry but only to those who are in the Lord (*μόνον ἐν κυρίῳ*). The final Christ language of 1 Cor 7 is stated in the context of differentiation of insider from outsider again. This stock phrase explicitly expresses Paul’s demand for Christian marriage if the insiders have not entered into romantic relation with outsiders. Paul’s demand is understandable because only those who are united with the Lord (6:17) can serve their partner and the Lord at the same time without distraction. When it is considered together with Paul’s previous teaching on mixed marriage in 7:12-16 and vv.25-38, Paul’s

stance towards mixed marriage is clear: *once you have joined in a mixed marriage, there is no opportunity for insiders to escape from it even though it costs you divided devotion to the Lord. Thus, take every opportunity to avoid it before you enter into it.*

Secondly, it summarizes Paul's preference for widows (and widowers) to remain single over Christian marriage, as Paul has mentioned before in 7:8. The phrase *μόνον ἐν κυρίῳ* should be read with v.40 because v.39b is tightly connected with v.40: she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord, but it is better if she remains as she is according to my opinion. *Paul prefers a Christian widow to remain single rather than getting married, even to a Christian.* Therefore, Paul does not say that the only / best option for a Christian widow is to marry an insider. What Paul intends to state is this: remaining single is the best option for Christian widows; otherwise, get married to Christians. As Paul has applied his principle of 7:9 in 7:36-38, he may now repeat his previous principle of 7:8 again in 7:39-40. The happiness of remaining a single mother refers to the well-being of the children and avoidance of the complicated relation of her children with their step-father and their future step-siblings (see section 5.2.3). These complicated "step"-relations remain even though the husband is a Christian. As Paul has repeated many times that the worst scenario is committing sexual sin (7:2, 9, 36), he omits the idea (though it is understood) after 7:40a: it is better to marry an unbeliever than to be tempted into committing sexual immorality. As Paul mentions *γνώμη* again in 7:40, it forms an *inclusio* of his paraenesis against mixed marriage in 7:25-40.

When Paul repeatedly remarks that "you do not sin / he does not sin [to marry]" (vv.28, 36), he does not imply that the choice of outsiders as spouse is justified. "One does not sin" should be understood in the light of Paul's previous solemn warnings against sexual immorality and the various lists of sinners in 1 Cor 5-6: it is not necessary for the church to execute social ostracism against those insiders who marry outsiders. Unlike those sins mentioned in 1 Cor

5-6, mixed marriage does not disqualify one's identity in Christ. However, it hinders one from loving the Lord without distraction.

When 7:25-40 is understood as Paul's normative teachings against marrying outsiders, the rhetorical purpose of the term "Lord" in v.25 is apparent: it signifies the audience to recall 7:12 about mixed marriage. The parallel declaration "it is not based on the word of the Lord" between v.12 and v.25 is the signpost. On the one hand, the audience senses the continuous explication of the theme "remaining in the social location when you are called" in vv.17-24. On the other hand, by recalling v.12 in v.25, they are aware that Paul teaches a practical application (halakha) of this theme in another social relationship — the criterion of choosing a spouse. Vv.32-25 and v.39 explicitly states this criterion—the spouse must secure your undivided devotion to the Lord. Thus, he or she must at least be one who is "in the Lord." (v.39) The rhetorical purpose of of this phrase, the last Christ language of 7:25-40, functions as a kernel message of Paul's summary statement against mixed marriage in 7:39-40: no divorce if you are already in it; stay away from mixed marriage either by remarrying with Christians or remaining single if you are not in it; remaining a widow is preferable to remarrying even with Christian for the sake of her children.

#### **6.4.4 New Tripartite Priority in Christ**

There are three purposes of marriage stated by Christ language in 1 Cor 7: besides helping one from committing sexual immorality (7:1-9) and establishing a life-long bodily union (7:10-16), Paul's disapproval of mixed marriage (7:25-40) indicates that the third purpose of marriage is to enhance a Christ-follower to love the Lord without distraction (7:32-35; cf. 8:3; 16:22). Based on these purposes, a tripartite hierarchy is set up by Paul to single and unmarried brothers and sisters in 1 Cor 7: marriage with devoted insiders or being single is preferable to mixed marriage and mixed marriage is preferable to adultery (resulting from divorce) or sexual



immorality. For those widows and widowers who are mostly single mothers or fathers, a fourfold hierarchy: being single for the well being of their children is preferable to Christian marriage, Christian marriage to mixed marriage and mixed marriage to sexual immorality.

Paul's disapproval of mixed marriage is again counter-cultural. In a polytheistic society like Roman Corinth, one often chooses a spouse without considering his / her cultic practice.<sup>530</sup> It was common for the husband to worship one god and the wife another. A wife was willing to follow the will of her husband (*pater familias*) and invited her god to protect the family. For the same reason, it was unlikely for the husband to prohibit her from worshipping her original family god. Moreover, as I have shown in section 5.5, worshipping different gods helped one build up different civic identities and lift up social status in the society. Thus, a different cultic practice of husband and wife was not an issue.

Paul, however, reminds the Corinthian Christians that it does matter to Christ followers. He asserts that slaves cannot serve two masters at the same time in their social lives. It is likely for the audience to understand the implication of exclusive loyalty to Christ when insiders are repeatedly reminded to be as "slaves of Christ" and "freedmen in the Lord patron" and to show "undivided devotion to the Lord" throughout 1 Cor 7.

Therefore, it is natural for Paul to launch the topic about attending idol meals in 1 Cor 8-11:1 right after his disapproval of marrying unbelievers. As for the latter, it is not sin. As for the former, however, it is related to a cardinal sin that disqualifies one's identity in Christ.

## **6.5 Christ Language in 1 Cor 8-11:1**

Christ language is mentioned in 8:6 and vv.11-12.

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<sup>530</sup> See Nancy Bookidis, "Religion in Corinth: 146 B.C.E. to 100 C.E.," 151-164 for the diverse cultic practices co-existing in Roman Corinth after 44 B.C.E.

### 6.5.1 One God, One Lord Jesus Christ

1 Cor 8:6 is a self-categorising statement which highlights the distinction of the church from outsiders. For it begins with a notable self-defining phrase “but for us” (ἀλλ’ ἡμῖν): while in the outside world there are different views about God: “an idol is nothing,” “there is no God but one” or “there are so many gods as well as many lords in heaven or on earth for them to worship,” but for us.... This catchy phrase “but for us” reveals Paul’s rhetorical purpose of distinguishing us from the outsiders. The distinctive characteristic of “but for us” is expressed in two aspects.

The first aspect is the divinity of Jesus Christ. For outsiders (probably the Jews), there is only “one God Yahweh” (8:4); but for us insiders there is “one God the Father, one Lord Jesus Christ.” The phrase “Lord Jesus Christ” is put in striking parallel to “God the Father.” Besides the difference of preposition (ἐξ vs δι’), there are other key differences between v.6a and v.6b in these two phrases:

ἀλλ’ ἡμῖν

εἰς θεὸς ὁ πατήρ

εἰς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς

ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν,

δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι’ αὐτοῦ.

καὶ

Numerous scholarship has explicated the implications from 1 Cor 8:4-6 which echoes the Jewish Shema in Deut 6:4 for the confession of the divinity of Jesus Christ.<sup>531</sup> Paul has

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<sup>531</sup> For a comprehensive survey of research on the earliest expression of devotion to Jesus in early churches of the past 20 years, see Larry W. Hurtado, “Early Devotion to Jesus: A Report, Reflections and

undertaken significant changes to the Jewish Shema. In Deut 6, the Greek “Lord” refers to “God”; in 1 Cor 8:6, the Greek “Lord” is only associated with Jesus Christ. “Jesus” is the only human name mentioned in this modified Shema.

If we combine these observations with our previous study on Paul’s echoes of Scripture in 1 Cor 8:4-6, his rhetorical purpose of modification becomes more obvious. In section 5.6.1, I have shown that one rhetorical purpose of the OT allusion to Deut 6 in 1 Cor 8:4 is to recall the image of “being cleaved to the Lord your God” in Deut 6:13-14. This image reminds the audience of Paul’s previous teaching against sexual sin in 1 Cor 6:16, where the Lord refers only to Jesus Christ.<sup>532</sup> It indicates that Paul transposes the Jewish core value of monotheism with Yahweh to Christians’ exclusive relation with the Lord Jesus Christ: while Jewish people should *be cleaved* (κολληθήσῃ) to the Lord your God and swear only in his *name* (Deut 6:13), but for us Christians we are *cleaved* only to the Lord and this title Lord now is attributed only to Jesus Christ (1 Cor 6:16; 8:6).

Based on the above rhetorical analysis of the Christ language in 1 Cor 8:6, I disagree with James D.G. Dunn’s notion of functional Christology proposed over 30 years ago which suggests

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Implications,” *ExpTimes* 122.4 (2011), 167-76. Scholars who defend for the confession of Jesus as divine in 1 Cor 8:6 include N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 120-136; Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 97-8; Hurtado, *How on Earth did Jesus Become a God? Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 48-9; Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 89-94; Richard Bauckham, “Biblical Theology and the Problems of Monotheism,” in *Jesus and the God of Israel: ‘God Crucified’ and other Studies on the New Testament’s Christology of Divine Identity* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster: 2008), 60-106 [pp.97-104]. Although there are minor differences, both come to a conclusion that 1 Cor 8:6 should be understood as a confession of early churches that Jesus is divine even in the context of second temple Judaism. Hurtado concludes that this confession of worshipping Jesus as divine is a mutation within Jewish monotheistic tradition.

<sup>532</sup> This differentiation of the Lord Jesus Christ from God is evident in 6:14: God raised the Lord...

that early churches, including the Pauline churches, did not confess that Jesus is divine until later development in the times of the Gospel of John. He claims that 1 Cor 8:6 is but an expression of wisdom Christology in ancient monotheistic Judaism and Christ is the fullest expression of the creative power of God.<sup>533</sup> My own exegesis, however, does not support Dunn's notion. Although Paul echoes Deut 6:4, he makes a significant change by adding a human name Jesus in the Shema and consistently differentiates between "God" and "Lord" (which refers to Jesus) both in 1 Cor 6:14 and 8:6. But in Deut 6:4, both God and the Lord refer to Yahweh. Hurtado's notion of mutation for early Christian confession explains Paul's innovation of this confession for insiders:

At the same time, it appears that early Christian devotion acquired a distinctive binitarian shape in comparison with known Jewish piety of the time. It also appears that the Christian inclusion of the exalted Jesus in their devotional life represented a distinctive mutation in ancient Jewish monotheistic tradition.<sup>534</sup>

Thus, Jesus Christ is regarded as divine in 1 Cor 8:6 which cannot be explained by ancient Jewish monotheism.

The second aspect of the distinctive characteristic of "but for us" is that there is an intended literary contrast between "many" and "one" in 8:5b and 8:6:

5 ...ὥσπερ εἰσὶν θεοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ κύριοι πολλοί,

6 ἀλλ' ἡμῖν εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ...καὶ εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ...

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<sup>533</sup> James D.G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: a New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition; London: SCM Press, 1989), 179-83. See also his defence against the critics in *Christology in the Making*, xi—xxxix. I observe that he does not address any critique against his exegesis in 1 Cor 8:6.

<sup>534</sup> Hurtado, *One God, One Lord*, 82.

8:5b actually affirms the existence and plurality of gods in the society. The structure of v.6 is set as a contrast to v.5b which is to emphasise the uniqueness (one God, one Lord) of the object of worship “for us.” The conjunction καὶ connecting v.6a and v.6b is better translated to “as well as,” similar to the meaning of καὶ in v.5b.<sup>535</sup> Thus, the contrast is many vs one: even though there were many lords and many gods, but for us we believe in one God.

This may be the key question Paul intends to tackle here. Unlike the context of Jewish monotheistic practice, it is not difficult for the Gentile Corinthian audience to confess that Jesus Christ is divine. The point that is at odds with the Gentile audience lies in the exclusiveness: If we have already worshipped Jesus Christ, why can’t we add other gods after Him?

James Crossley has shown that there may be a notion of “pagan monotheism” in late antiquity:

What is significant is the ways in which monotheistic tendencies in a pagan context are defined. It is effectively described in the same way as Jewish and Christian monotheism(s) in that there is the idea of one God over all and upon whom everything depends yet at the same time lesser divinities are allowed their place in the supernatural system...A pagan opponent or a different kind of Christian may well have replied to Paul in a similar manner (cf. e.g. 1 Cor 8, 5-6; 10, 20-21). Whatever, on the

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<sup>535</sup> Another instance of differentiating insiders from outsiders with similar formula ‘but for us’ for expressing the overt contrast is in 9:25b: they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we imperishable (ἡμεῖς δὲ ἀφθαρτον).

general level it is difficult to see how these pagan supernatural systems differ structurally from Jewish and Christian views on monotheism.<sup>536</sup>

In the light of this “pagan monotheism,” we may understand more the concern that Paul intends to address and correct. The echoes of Scripture alone cannot stop the Corinthian Christians from keeping the gods they had previously worshipped, as they may still bear this concept of pagan monotheism, that worshipping other gods under the authority of the Most High God YHWH in Scripture can also be counted as worshipping Him.<sup>537</sup> Therefore, Paul states in 8:5 that although there are many “gods” and “lords” in the supernatural system (in heaven or on earth), we do not regard it in the same way. For us, we worship Jesus Christ who is never a lesser divinity under the highest God over all and upon whom everything depends. Jesus Christ is the God “through whom are all things and through whom we exist.” (8:6) He is situated at the same level as the creator God or the Most High God. Not only is Jesus Christ divine, He is equally ranked with the Most High God and so cannot be regarded as a god under the authority of the Most High God.

If we combine this confession of Jesus Christ as the Lord through whom all things exist in 1 Cor 8:6 and the echoes of Deut 6 in 1 Cor 8:4, the message of exclusiveness is more evident. The echoes of Deut 6 recall the theme of God’s jealousy in Deut 6:15-16 and the great commandment to the Lord (love the Lord with all your heart and with all your strength in Deut

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<sup>536</sup> James G. Crossley, “Moses and Pagan Monotheism,” in *La Construction de La Figure de Moïse* (Supplément n° 13 à Transeuphraténe; T. Römer éd.; Gabalda: Paris, 2007), 263-279. [p.267]

<sup>537</sup> However, scholars have not yet come to a consensus on the precise definition of “pagan monotheism” in the Roman world. Concerning the debate on its definition, see Stephen Mitchell and Peter van Nuffelen, eds., *One God: Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire*. For arguments regarding the existence of pagan monotheism from the writings of Greek philosophers from the third to the sixth century AD, see Polymnia Athanassiadi and Michael Frede ed., *Pagan Monotheism in Later Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

6:5). The Corinthian audience had received a clear signal from Paul's Christ language that they can only worship the Lord Jesus Christ who is not subordinate to YHWH and should abandon other gods and lords as representatives of YHWH. Worshipping other gods and lords in their supernatural system is now counted as idolatry, as what the Jewish people had been warned in Deut 6. As the Corinthian audience was familiar with the binary gods like Demeter and Kore, it was not difficult for them to regard the Father God revealed in the OT and the Lord Jesus Christ as one object of worship.

In sum, the rhetorical purpose of "Lord Jesus Christ" in 8:6 is to affirm Jesus Christ as the object of worship as well as the unique object of worship by the insiders.

### 6.5.2 Through Christ We Exist

In order to identify the rhetorical purpose of the Christ language in v.11-12, we should start analysing the consecutive conjunction "but" (ἀλλά) at the beginning of v.6 and v.7.

This pattern of using two or more consecutive conjunctions "but" (ἀλλά) is common in 1 Corinthians: 2:4-5; 3:1-2, 6-7; 4:3-4, 14-15, 19-20; 6:11-13; 7:4; 8:6-7; 9:12 and 10:23. The phrases after the two occurrences of "but" belong to the same category and Paul's emphatic statement lies in those phrases after the conjunction.<sup>538</sup> Interpreting 8:6-7 in the light of this common pattern of two consecutive ἀλλά in 1 Corinthians, the second ἀλλά in v.7 does not signify the start of a new paragraph or a negation of v.6. Rather it is a continuation of this self-categorising statement starting from 'but for us' in v.6, showing the real practice of some insiders. Paul's ἀλλά in 8:7 describes a subgroup within the insiders designated in v.6 who do not put his belief into practice: some insiders do not possess this knowledge. It should be

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<sup>538</sup> For instance, Paul's emphasis in 6:11 lies after the thrice repeated ἀλλά. See my exegesis in section 6.3.1.

noted that this subgroup of insiders is not just confined to the weak but includes both the knowers and the weak. The knowers and weak are in a relation of leader and follower or elder brother and younger brother. The weak follow the example of the knowers as Paul claims that the weak will be “edified” to eat idol meals in v.10. The knowers are reminded that the weak are “your” brothers when Paul describes them as “my brother” twice (8:13). Therefore, both the knowers and the weak belong to the same subgroup within the insiders described in 8:7 who do not possess this knowledge. Both the knowers (8:10) and the weak do not know the implications of the confession “through the Lord Jesus Christ we exist.”(8:6c)

In the light of the preceding context and the “Christ Shema” in 8:6, the Christ language in 8:11-12 is used for highlighting the same consequence of the weak brothers and the knowers. Paul emphasises how precious and costly it is to save an idolater for Christ. The weak brother is the one for whom Christ died because “through whom the weak brother exists.” As the knowers are also those people for whom Christ died, Christ is also the ground of existence of the knowers: through Christ the knowers exist. Thus, when the knowers sin against Christ, they actually sin against their own ground of existence and entail the dangers of destruction to themselves. Christ reminds the knowers of the precious status of the salvation of the weak brother as well as the fatal consequence of themselves for making him fall. For both the knowers and the weak stand on the same ground (through the Lord Jesus Christ they exist) and so they share the same destiny.

On the other hand, 8:11-12 is also a solemn warning against the weak. The catchy phrases “through whom [Christ] we exist” in 8:6 and “destroyed—the weak” (*ἀπόλλυται γὰρ ὁ ἁσθενῶν*) in 8:11 warn about the destiny of their own destruction. If they go back to the previous idolatrous life and worship other gods, their identity as insiders will be definitely



destroyed. Thus, Paul's warning to the knowers in 8:11 is also a warning to the weak brothers.

In sum, Paul not only appeals to the scripture (Deut 6) to urge the audience to reevaluate properly the act of eating idol meals, he also appeals to "Christ" to evaluate attending idol meals in the temple in 8:11-12.

### 6.5.3 The Gospel-in-Motion

Christ language permeates 1 Cor 9: vv.1-2, 5, 12-14, 21. The rhetorical purpose of the term "Lord", however, is different from "Christ."

Paul stresses the importance of saving insiders from falling in 8:10-13 and the importance of the salvation of outsiders in 1 Cor 9 which are both linked to Christ. Both are set in the pattern that Christ stands antithetical to one's own freedom. Finally, both are presented and argued by Paul's paradigmatic "I" statement (8:13 // 1 Cor 9).

Some scholars still adopt 1 Cor 9 as a digression of Paul's defence of his apostleship.<sup>539</sup> However, this interpretation does not stand. The key problem with this digression theory is that Paul's defence of his apostleship cannot go beyond v.3, as Dustin W. Ellington observes:

However, 'this' (αὕτη) of v.3 points backward, not forward; if we look for a defense of his apostleship, we do not find it as we continue reading beyond v.3....The tiny defense of his apostleship in vv. 1 and 2 serves to substantiate his rights and freedoms in the verses that follow.<sup>540</sup>

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<sup>539</sup> Besides those who advocate partition theories to interpret 1 Cor, see, for instance, Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 151-2; Christian Dietzfelbinger, *Die Berufung des Paulus als Ursprung seiner Theologie* (WMANT 58; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985), 46-8; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 394-400; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 354.

<sup>540</sup> Dustin W. Ellington, "Imitating Paul's Relationship to the Gospel: 1 Corinthians 8.1—11.1," *JSNT* 33.3 (2011): 303-15. [p.307]

Those rights that Paul seeks to assert in ensuing rhetorical questions in vv.4-14 (the right to live by the gospel and the right to marry) are not confined only to apostles. They are rights of any travelling evangelists, too. Moreover, Paul continues to use his strategy of the “I” statement starting from 8:13 to invite the audience, especially the knowers, to identify with him. The audience are drawn to identify themselves with Paul’s “I” except in 9:11, where Paul begins to speak explicitly the difference between “we” and “you.” Therefore, it is more reasonable to regard 9:1-23 as expounding Paul’s “I” statement in 8:13: laying down your own rights for the purpose of not causing your own brother to fall.

Reading 9:1-23 as a further elaboration of 8:13, I observe that the term “Lord” is used to support the entitlement of rights deserved by Paul. The rhetorical function of “Christ,” however, is radically different.

The first rhetorical function of the word “Lord” is Paul’s defence of his aposteship in 9:1-3. He is the eyewitness of Jesus our Lord and the audience designated as “my work in the Lord” (v.1) and “the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.”(v.2) The second rhetorical function is his defence of his right to marry. The “brothers of the Lord” mentioned in v.5 probably refer to the blood family members of Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>541</sup> Paul compares himself with the brothers of the Lord to justify his right of marrying a believing wife. The third rhetorical function shows Paul is in defence of his right to earn a living by preaching the gospel in 9:14. Paul quotes a saying of the Lord which is probably a summary of Jesus’ instructions about mission work to Israel (Mark 6:7-11; Matt 10:1-15; Luke 9:1-15; 10:1-12).<sup>542</sup> In sum, the rhetorical purpose of the term “Lord” in 1 Cor 9 is to support the three rights entitled to Paul.

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<sup>541</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 403; Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (London: T&T Clark, 1990), 59-60. *Contra* Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 359-60.

<sup>542</sup> Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 414 and n.18 in p.414.

“Christ”, however, lies in the main thrust of the whole argument in 1 Cor 9. It is shown after the repeated conjunction ἀλλὰ in 9:12:

ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐχρησάμεθα τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ ταύτῃ,

ἀλλὰ πάντα στέγομεν, ἵνα μὴ τινὰ ἐγκοπὴν δῶμεν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Ellington’s interpretation of the gospel of Christ in 9:12 is worth noting:

The idea of a potential obstacle assumes the gospel itself to be in motion. The gospel is a power or force on the move; to a degree Paul personifies it here. This meaning of εὐαγγέλιον as an advancing force or power is important for the present context, because it sheds light on Paul’s decision to renounce his rights. Committed to the gospel’s forward movement, Paul wishes to exemplify for the congregation how *not* to stand in the gospel’s way.<sup>543</sup>

Paul’s main thrust after 9:12b does not bespeak his own rights to the audience and ask for their recognition. Rather, *he highlights the forward movement of the gospel of Christ*. From v.12 onwards, the gospel is shorthand for “gospel of Christ.” *Gospel is personified as a vehicle or ripple that keeps on moving forwards or outwards*. Insiders either enhance its movement or become an obstacle in its path.

Then in 9:15 onwards, Paul further expounds the movement of the gospel and persuades the audience to participate in this movement through the rhetorical ‘I’ discourse. One main theme of 9:15-18 is that Paul has been entrusted with stewardship (οἰκονομίαν πεπίστευμαι in 9:17). Once the audience members have identified themselves with the pronoun “I” in

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<sup>543</sup> Ellington, “Imitating Paul’s Relationship to the Gospel,” 307-8.

9:15-18, this discourse then becomes Paul's version of the "great commission." Whether the audience are willing or not, they should preach the gospel of Christ entrusted to them.

9:19-23 is then the climax of Paul's discourse of stewardship of the gospel-in-motion. It shows explicitly the direction of the movement of the gospel: like a ripple, the gospel moves from the Christian community to different subgroups of outsiders: Jews, those under the law, those outside the law and the weak (potential outsiders). The two verbs "I make myself a slave(ἐδούλωσα)" and "so that I might win (κερδάνω)" in v.19 serve as headings of 9:19-23 to describe his ministry.<sup>544</sup> The word "freedom" functions as a literary link throughout 1 Cor 9 that shows the connection between 9:19-23 and the preceding context 8:13-9:18. 9:19-23 is then not a statement to appease outsiders<sup>545</sup> but Paul's great commission of saving some outsiders expressed in the repeated purpose clause "so that I might win..." and enhancing the outward movement of the gospel.

Throughout 1 Cor 8-9:23, Paul consistently persuades the Corinthian Christians to abandon attending idol meals for the sake of the gospel. There is always a purpose behind his sayings "to X, I become like X" in 9:19-23: winning X or save some of category X. With reference to 8:4-6, the purpose of "winning" or "saving some" is naturally understood as changing outsiders who acknowledge the existence of many gods and many lords into those who confess the Christ Shema: "there is only one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all

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<sup>544</sup> See the diagram in Ellington, "Imitating Paul's Relationship to the Gospel," 308.

<sup>545</sup> The notion of "appeasing outsiders" or "Paul's accommodation with social lives and perspectives of outsiders" is one common accepted interpretation of 9:19-23. See the works listed in the supplementary bibliography of 9:19-23 in Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 699-700. The page number of Mitchell's work *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation* listed in Thiselton's supplementary bibliography in p.700 should be 243-9, NOT 343-49. See also David G. Horrell, "Idol-Food, Idolatry and Ethics in Paul."

things and through whom we exist.” In other words, Christ language links the core message of the gospel (8:6) to the goal of preaching the gospel (9:19-23).

If we attempt to understand 9:12b-23 from the perspective of the audience, the message against attending idol meals is more apparent. 9:12b is already a warning to the knowers: not to put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ. Their participation in the idol meals hinders the movement of the gospel even though it is only a family or friend’s social gathering. After speaking three times of winning people in 9:20-21 with the word “like”(ὡς), Paul mentions the last target group for preaching the gospel as “the weak”. The word “like”(ὡς) is omitted to describe “the weak” in 9:22. Although it may be accounted by Paul’s stylistic variation or coincidence, it is more plausible to regard this omission as a means of singling out the weak from the previous three groups of outsiders. Winning the previous three groups suggests a faithful presentation of the gospel in their own terms. But for the fourth group, the way to win the weak brothers is not to cause them to stumble and fall. If insiders are entrusted to preach the gospel of “one God, one Lord” to the outsiders, how much more should we be responsible to watch over the weak insiders (who have already made the confession in 8:6) from breaking the confession?<sup>546</sup> The “I” statements in 9:22-23 “I became weak that I might win the weak...for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become her [gospel] partner (συγκαινωνός)” is a powerful persuasion technique to the knowers to refocus their attention to the salvation of their weak younger brothers instead of their own rights.

For the weak, the long discourse 9:12b-23 about the movement of the gospel can also be perceived as a series of warnings. As the direction of the gospel is towards the world, the metaphor “obstacle of the gospel” in 9:12b refers to something that is socially located in the

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<sup>546</sup> Cf. Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth*, 142-3 and Phua, *Idolatry and Authority*, 193-5 which give arguments for identifying the weak mentioned in 9:22 with the weak brother repeatedly mentioned in 8:7-12.

world. For the weak brothers, it implies their previous idolatrous lives of worshipping the dumb idols (cf. 12:2). Their relapse into their previous idolatrous lives entails an obstacle to the outward movement of the ripple-like gospel because it hinders outsiders from confessing “one God, one Lord.” Thus, 9:12b is an implicit warning to the weak not to turn back. In 9:23, the weak are also invited to identify themselves with the “I” as partner of the gospel. Therefore, they should also move in the same direction of the gospel. This warning is made explicit in 10:1-22 through retelling the story of the journey of ancient Israel in the wilderness.

While the “gospel of Christ” in 9:12 indicates the direction of the movement of the gospel, “the law of Christ” in 9:21 then shows the controlling principles for insiders to achieve the gospel mission. This phrase exists only in this verse and in Gal 6:2.<sup>547</sup> In Gal 6:2, the law of Christ is manifested in the Christian community when members bear each other’s burden. In applying the principle to 9:21, it refers to bearing the burden of weak brothers. It should be noted that the phrase “μὴ ὣν ἄνομος θεοῦ ἀλλ’ ἐννομος Χριστοῦ” is not to explicate the methods Paul used to win those who are outside the Law. Rather, it expresses the principle that governs the freedom of insiders in spreading the gospel. Then in v.22, he states explicitly the principle: to the weak I became weak so that I may win the weak. This recalls Paul’s emphatic statement in 8:13: for the sake of guarding the salvation of the weak (keeping their conscience from being defiled), I became weak (I will never eat meat). The law of Christ—for the salvation of other insiders—explicates the meaning of voluntary self-discipline in 9:19: “I enslaved myself to all so that I may win the more.”

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<sup>547</sup> Garland says that “Paul refers to ‘the law of Christ’ in Rom. 8:2 and Gal. 6:2.” See Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 432. It is not correct. In Rom 8:2, it literally means “the law of the spirit of life *in* Christ Jesus.” It cannot be counted as an expression of “the law of Christ.”

Therefore, the *gospel* of Christ and the *law* of Christ are not antithetical to each other. Both phrases correspond to the mission (in order to win some) and the controlling rule (governing the freedom of all insiders for the salvation of outsiders and guarding against the potential fall of insiders) respectively. If the whole church follows this law of Christ, the gospel of Christ will be advanced.

In conclusion, the term “Lord” in 1 Cor 9 shows the entitlements of Paul: the right of apostleship, the right to marry and the right to earn salary (for food and drink) by preaching the gospel. The “I” statement in 9:1-11 functions as a rhetorical device to invite the audience to say “amen” with Paul: yes, we do have these rights. The main thrust of Paul, however, lies in the phrases after the two occurrences of “but” in 9:12b. By changing the term “Lord” to “Christ,” Paul highlights the mission of insiders to convert the outsiders to confess the Christ Shema defined in 8:6. For the purpose of realising this evangelical mission, any insider should lay down his own presumed rights (law of Christ).

## **6.5.4 Refraining from Idol Meals**

### **6.5.4.1 The Moving Rock**

The Christ language permeates 10:4, 9, 16, 21-22 and 11:1.

First of all, the controversial phrase “the rock was Christ” in 10:4 is examined. There has been a heated debate concerning the relationship between the moving rock (the spiritual rock following them) and Christ when Paul states “the rock was Christ” in 10:4.<sup>548</sup> The interpretations can be roughly divided into two categories, typological and literal. For the former, scholars usually appeal to various typological interpretations in Jewish literature and

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<sup>548</sup> See Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 727-30.

OT allusions in 1 Cor 10:4 to identify Christ with Jewish wisdom or the “moveable well.”<sup>549</sup>

One echoed OT text, Deut 32, states explicitly that Yahweh is the rock. However, it is only found in the Hebrew version, not in LXX. Even though some of the audience, such as the synagogue leaders in Corinth, knew Hebrew and various possible rabbinic interpretations about the spring rock, Paul always distinguishes Christ from Yahweh in the OT in 1 Corinthians. Moreover, the subsequent story of Israel’s wilderness journey is repeatedly recorded in many different OT texts and so it is difficult for the audience to recall any one in particular. Therefore, although it is possible to have a typological interpretation of the rock standing for Christ, it was too complicated for the neophytes to understand which seems to be disconnected from Paul’s ongoing rhetorical strategy.<sup>550</sup>

I propose to interpret “the rock was Christ” at face value: Christ really is the rock who was present throughout Israel’s wilderness journey. First, Paul uses the imperfect verb “was”

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<sup>549</sup> Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 222-3; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 448-9; Hays, *1 Corinthians*, 161; Horsley, *1 Corinthians*, 136-7; Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, 85; Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians*, 383. For a survey of scholars who interpret the personified Jewish wisdom as the moving rock who guided the Israelites in the wilderness, see Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 729; for a survey of rabbinic traditions which interpret the rock as a moveable well, see Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, n.41 in p.727. James W. Aageson appeals to DSS to link the moveable well with the new Torah in the eschatological era. Then, by the reference of Rom 10: 6-8 which signals Paul’s substitution of the Torah with Christ, Aageson explains why Paul identifies the rock with Christ. See Aageson, “Written Also for Our Sake,” 161-9. Aageson’s interpretation, however, is subject to the fallacy of parallelomania. For in the context of CD-A 6.3-4, the term “well” is symbolised as the observance of the Law opposite to the three nets of Belial (see section 3.3.2.2 of this thesis) while the rock is literally the spring well in Deut 32. The same term “well” conveys radically different semantic meanings in Deut 32 and in CD-A.

<sup>550</sup> The notion of identifying personified Jewish wisdom with the moving rock is mainly based on the Wisdom of Solomon. However, Gordon Fee observes that in Wis 11:4, the whole chapter Wis 11 or even the whole book Wisdom of Solomon, the praise of the author always directly addresses God, Yahweh, for the provision of water out of flinty rock, not the personified wisdom. Thus, personified wisdom is not associated with the “spring” rock. see Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 96-7.



and not “is” in 10:4 which is a confession of the pre-existence of Christ who really existed in history.<sup>551</sup> Secondly, it should be noted that the presence of Christ in ancient Israel’s wilderness journey does not end in 10:4 but is mentioned again in 10:9.<sup>552</sup> In 10:11, Paul concludes the wilderness story with an imperfect verb: “these things *happened* to them as an example” (ταῦτα δὲ τυπικῶς συνέβαινεν ἐκείνοις). Similar to the imperfect verb “was” in 10:4, Paul shows that the events mentioned before had really happened in the history of “our” fathers, ancient Israel. When he says “our” fathers in 10:1, Paul’s rhetoric is to identify the audience with the descendants of the ancient Israelites.<sup>553</sup> Therefore, Christ in 10:4 and in 10:9 (...as some of them did [put Christ to the test]) is naturally taken as a real character being present in the event which happened in the wilderness journey. If it is combined with the echoes of Isthmian idol meals discussed in section 5.6.4, the rhetorical purpose of Christ language further strengthens Paul’s warning that the same Christ will punish you for attending Isthmian idol meals as He did the Israelites in the wilderness.

Most important of all, this literal interpretation is consistent with Paul’s ongoing depiction of the advancement of the gospel in 1 Cor 9. When the audience heard the adjective “spiritual” three times in 10:3-4, they were likely to recall the previous “spiritual” good in 9:11. To the audience, the spiritual good in 9:11 meant the sowing of the gospel that

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<sup>551</sup> Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians*, 201; Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 166-7; Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth : A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans ; Carlisle : Paternoster Press, 1995), 218-9; Oropeza, *Paul and Apostasy*, 105.

<sup>552</sup> Some later manuscripts Ν, B and C replace Χριστόν with κύριον in 10:9. However, Christ is attested in the earliest manuscript P46. For other internal evidence besides this external evidence that prefer Χριστόν to κύριον to be original, see Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 740.

<sup>553</sup> The differentiation of the audience and ancient Israelites is evident in the repetition of “us” and “they” in 10:6-11, in particular 10:6: “Now these things are warnings for *us*, not to desire evil as *they* did.”

brings salvation to them.<sup>554</sup> Later, in 1 Cor 9:12b-23, the long discourse suggests to the audience that they should move forward together with the gospel of Christ according to the law of Christ. Now, when Paul retells the story of the wilderness journey, Christ is depicted as a moving object again: the rock following them. The impact of this dynamic image reveals a parallel movement of Christ in the story of their fathers and in their own story. As Christ had accompanied the Israelites as a moving rock throughout the wilderness journey in the past, the same Christ is also accompanying the Corinthians to advance the gospel. When it is combined with the rhetorical purpose of OT echoes in 10:1-13, an interesting parallel of imagery is disclosed: while the imagery of the athletes (9:24-27) and the tragedy of the wilderness story (10:1-5) form an exact reverse scenario of the rite of the re-enactment of the finding and burial of the body of Melikertes in the Isthmian idol meal, the imagery of a gospel-in-motion (9:12b-23), runners in a race (9:24) and the moving rock (10:4) collage together and form the picture of the movement of insiders with Christ.

#### **6.5.4.2 Idol Meals Replaced by Christ's Meal**

The theme of Christ-followers as partners of the gospel of Christ reaches its climax when Paul explicitly states the consequences of attending idol meals in vv.15-22, whether it is for family gatherings, recognition of social status or thanksgiving to the city patron Caesar. The Christ language in 10:16, 21-22 is mentioned with reference to the consequence.

In v.15, Paul's request "judge for yourselves what I say" does not appeal to the audience's common sense based on their polytheistic culture because worshipping new gods

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<sup>554</sup> Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 206; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 409.

did not convey any sense of guilt or disloyalty to their current gods.<sup>555</sup> It is more reasonable for Paul to appeal to their knowledge of exclusive allegiance to Jesus Christ in 8:6 and his previous teachings about the Lord's Supper. In 1 Cor 11:23, he states that the institution of the Lord's Supper is what he received from the Lord and delivered to the Corinthians. When Paul names the cup taken in the Lord's Supper with a Semitic phrase "the cup of blessing/thanksgiving" in 10:16, "it is upon *covenant* rather than upon the Passover meal as such that emphasis derived from the sharing of the cup of blessing falls primarily. [italics mine]"<sup>556</sup> This exclusive covenantal relation of the participants of the Lord's Supper with Christ is implicit here but is later expounded explicitly in 11:23-34.

Christ language exists in two phrases in v.16: "the blood of Christ" and "the body of Christ." Both highlight the fellowship (κοινωνία) of the audience with the blood and the body of Christ. This fellowship has a strong tone of an exclusive covenant relationship and is set diametrically opposite to the sharers (κοινωνοὶ) of the altar in v.18 and sharers (κοινωνοὺς) with demons in v.20.<sup>557</sup>

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<sup>555</sup> Philip A. Harland has pointed out that this exclusive claim on the allegiances of their members is not unique in Christian community but can also be found in some cultic associations such as the association devoted to Zeus Hypsistos ("Most High") in Philadelphia, Egypt. However, Harland still admits that "religious exclusivity was not the norm in a polytheistic society." See Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 183.

<sup>556</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 760. See pp. 756-60 for his comprehensive survey of previous research on the Semitic nature of the phrase "cup of blessing" and the possibility of the influence of Jewish Passover tradition to Paul.

<sup>557</sup> Cf. German scholars Weiss, Seesemann and Strobel who both emphasise the connotation of communal solidarity and participation that the word κοινωνία carries in 10:16-20. See J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (9th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910), 258; H. Seesemann, *Der Begriff κοινωνία in NT* (BZNW 14; Giessen: Töpelmann, 1933), 24, 99, 193; A. Strobel, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, Zürcher Bibelkommentare (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1989), 158.

<sup>16</sup> Τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, <sup>18</sup> οὐχ οἱ ἐσθίοντες τὰς θυσίας κοινωνοὶ τοῦ  
οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ; θυσιαστηρίου εἰσίν;  
τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλῶμεν οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος <sup>20</sup> οὐ θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς κοινωνοὺς τῶν δαιμονίων  
τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστίν; γίνεσθαι.

From the perspective of the audience, “cup” and “blood” are vivid images in the cultic rituals of Roman Corinth. People involved in cultic practices gave libations of wine *by cups* on the ground as offerings to the deceased or some gods of wine.<sup>558</sup> For animal sacrifices, they were accustomed to the ritual of pouring out *the blood* of the animals on the altar as part of sacrifices to the idols followed by a meat meal.<sup>559</sup> Paul sets these two rituals common in idol meals (libation and cultic sacrifices) as the antithesis to fellowship with the blood and body of Christ (10:16). Moreover, Paul associates them with the idolatry of the Israelites and sacrifices to demons in 10:18, 20 respectively. Through setting up these two contrastive scenarios in Christ language, the rhetorical purpose of Paul’s message to the audience is clear and resolute: once you were called into the fellowship (*κοινωνίαν*) of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord (1:9), you should no longer be involved in any idol meals. Thus, your participation in idol meals violates your identity as partners of the gospel of Christ. This is Paul’s concluding statement on eating idol meals in terms of Christ language.

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<sup>558</sup> Hans-Josef Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions* (trans. Brian McNeil; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 76, 108.

<sup>559</sup> Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity*, 16-7. In some cultic rituals like the rituals of oath and covenant, both libation of wine and pouring out of animal blood on the ground were done together. See Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity*, 20-1.

#### 6.5.4.3 Imitating Paul's Life with Christ-defined Values

Now we have come to the final Christ language of 5:1—11:1. The noun *μιμητής* exists only in 4:16 and 11:1 in 1 Corinthians. In addition to the unique identical phrase *μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε* which exists only in 4:16 and 11:1, I am convinced that this repetition is not accidental. This pair of phrases is an intended bracketing arrangement of Paul to articulate this long paraenesis 4:16—11:1 as one literary unit. It functions as an *inclusio* of this long discourse. Paul urges them to *μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε* in 4:16 and now he encloses this teaching discourse with the addition of a Christ clause in 11:1: *καθὼς καὶ γὰρ Χριστοῦ*. A question naturally arises: what aspect of himself does Paul expect Corinthians to imitate? Why does Paul add “as I [imitate] Christ” here in the closure of this paraenesis instead of just repeating *μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε* in 4:16?

Based on my rhetorical interpretation of Paul's use of Ps 23:1 in 10:25 in section 5.6.5, the previous context 10:25-32 was offensive to the audience. The thrust is that Jesus Christ is the only patron of Christ-followers and this should be manifested in their thanksgiving attitude to Christ in social meals. No other gods can seize this honour from Jesus Christ. Then in 10:33 Paul mentions again his own personal example in an “I” statement as he has been doing in 8:13-9:27. 11:1 is closely connected with the paradigmatic “I” in 10:33:

<sup>33</sup> *καθὼς καὶ γὰρ πάντα πᾶσιν ἀρέσκω μὴ ζητῶν τὸ ἑμαυτοῦ σύμφορον ἀλλὰ τὸ τῶν πολλῶν, ἵνα σωθῶσιν.*

<sup>1</sup>*μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε καθὼς καὶ γὰρ Χριστοῦ.*

In the light of my new interpretation of the preceding context, the thrust of 10:33 is not about avoiding offensiveness to others. The adjective *ἀπρόσκοποι* in 10:32 should be translated as “being blameless” instead of “giving no offence” because Paul's addition of a human name

Jesus into the Jewish Shema in 1 Cor 8:6 does create offence to the Jews.<sup>560</sup> The whole discourse of 1 Cor 8-10 that condemns idol meals as idolatry does cause great offence to the Church of God, including both the knowers and the weak. Finally, in 10:25-32, those who practice Paul's admonition "do not eat it" in the invitation meals of their friends or family definitely offend the Gentile host. Thus, Paul's teachings in 1 Cor 8-10 create offence both to the Jews, the Gentiles and even the Church of God.

The phrase "not seeking my own advantage but for others' [advantage]" in 10:33 does not refer to friendly acceptance of outsiders, either. It is because the thrust of 10:33 lies at the last purpose clause: so that they may be saved (ἵνα σωθῶσιν). "Be saved" refers to the opposite meaning of Paul's warnings like falling, destruction, degenerated into an apostate and committing sins that hinder one from inheriting the Kingdom of God throughout 1 Cor 5-11:1 (5:5, 9-11; 6:9-10; 7:2; 8:11-12; 9:27; 10:12, 22). In the light of the last purpose clause of salvation in 10:33, Paul's urge of imitation of Christ is then an urge to live out Christ-defined values in their social lives. These values are the key points of Paul's teachings in 5:1—11:1. Therefore, Paul adds this phrase καθὼς ἀγὼ Χριστοῦ as closure: be imitators of me, as I live out the Christ-defined values. As a result, it brings a real advantage to outsiders— that they may be saved.<sup>561</sup>

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<sup>560</sup> This shows that Paul's concern in 1 Cor 8-10 is not whether Christ-followers should be Torah-free or Torah-observant. His resolute no against idolatry coincides with the Jews' position towards idolatry but the rationale is radically different: it is due to our exclusive allegiance to Jesus Christ. This Christ-defined argument and the mutated "Jesus-God Shema" in 1 Cor 8:6 are deemed unacceptable to any Torah-observant Jew in Paul's time.

<sup>561</sup> Recently, David Horrell states that 1 Cor 10:32 is Paul's expression of the idea of a 'third race' *in nuce* : a third grouping 'Christians' alongside Jews and Greeks, although the term 'race' is not used there. See David Horrell, " 'Race', 'Nation', 'People': Ethnic Identity-Construction in 1 Peter 2.9," *NTS* 58 (2011): 123-43. [Pp.132-4] If 1 Cor 10:32 is already germane to the later self-designation of Christians as "the

### 6.5.5 Christ Language Defining Idolatry

For modern readers in the West who are accustomed to Christian culture and have not shared in cultic practices, it is easy to take Paul's message for granted, but a nuanced study of the concept of "religion" in the ancient Roman world shows how novel Paul's message was. Although it was difficult to pin down the meaning of the word "religion" in the ancient Roman world, scholars of classical studies have repeatedly reminded us of its striking difference from modern understandings of "religion" baptised by Christian influence.<sup>562</sup> I will discuss the differences relevant to our discussion in 1 Cor 10.

First of all, the role of "doctrinal beliefs" in Graeco-Roman religion was not as important as in Christianity; this did not mean that there were no beliefs in their worship of gods but people did not require a coherent set of doctrines and they could hold various beliefs in different cultic contexts of worshipping a variety of gods. Even though these different beliefs were mutually contradictory, people could still embrace them together.<sup>563</sup> Graeco-Roman religion was properly classified as non-confessional and people were more concerned with the ways of approaching the divine in cultic practice and the benefits the gods granted to them in their everyday life. Beliefs were at most derived from cultic acts, not the other way

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third race," Paul's emphasis in 1 Cor 10:32-33 is then the distinctiveness of insiders from the Jews and Greeks instead of urging insiders to be assimilated with outsiders, whoever they are Jews or non-Jews. By combining this final purpose clause ἵνα σωθῶσιν in 10:33 and the imitation imperative in 11:1, Paul further defines the mission of the prototype of "the third race:" transforming the other two races to become "us." This commission echoes Paul's designation of the church of God in 1 Cor 1:2: all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both *their* Lord and *ours*.

<sup>562</sup> Mary Beard, John A. North, and S. R. F. Price, *Religions of Rome: A History*, (2 vols; Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1: 42-54; David Frankfurter, "Traditional Cult," in *A Companion to the Roman Empire* (ed. David S. Potter; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 543-564 [pp.557-64]; James B. Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 13-53.

<sup>563</sup> Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 23, 27, 42, 47-50.

around.<sup>564</sup> As a result, the term “idolatry” was absent in the dictionary of the social world and was a distinctive novel idea of a Judeo-Christian construct against a Graeco-Roman religion.<sup>565</sup> Combining this characteristic with the concept of pagan monotheism, it was understandable for Corinthian neophytes to continue attending other idol meals or participating in the cultic worship of other gods even though they had made the confession stated in 1 Cor 8:6.

This characteristic of normalising cultic meals may explain why Paul advocates the notion of the real presence of Christ in the wilderness. This notion well defines idolatry as the worship of gods other than Christ or worship of created images as representations of Christ. Moreover, the real presence of Christ in various stories of the rebellion of Israelites reveals the definite consequence of idolatry.

Secondly, Paul’s imperative “flee from idolatry” in 10:14 would have been nonsense to the audience if they had not heard the previous scriptural story with Paul’s notion of the real presence of Christ. Images of their gods penetrated into their everyday lives and could be found in many public buildings such as libraries, baths and markets<sup>566</sup> and cultic rituals could

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<sup>564</sup> “But it is crucial to keep in mind that the cult acts themselves constituted these ideas and beliefs. Cult practices were not the expression of a formalized doctrinal system, but were instead a self-sufficient approach to the divine.” Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 27-28. See also Mary Beard, John A. North, and S. R. F. Price, *Religions of Rome: A History*, 1: 42.

<sup>565</sup> Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 34.

<sup>566</sup> Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 35. Although some rabbis of the Roman period distinguished the images of gods in the public space as merely decorative rather than idolatrous, Rives points out that any image of gods in the Roman religion could not be purely art without connotation of being an object of worship. This distinction is artificial which overlooks the inseparableness of myth and art in their social lives, just as we cannot classify the stained glass in the church built in the medieval period as purely art which carries no religious connotation. See Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 35-7.



take place at any place and time, not restricted to the temple but even at home.<sup>567</sup> Paul's command "flee from idolatry" is to subvert their values towards these "omnipresent" images of gods, images no longer linked to the divine but to grave sin against their fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, the either-or relation of participation in the table of the Lord and the table of demons would have also shocked the audience. For them, the term "demon" (δαιμόνιον) could be a neutral or a positive term, similar to θεός, designating superhuman forces, underworld gods or souls of the dead.<sup>568</sup> It was connoted with a reverent attitude when the deceased souls were ancestors of one's family. The following is a typical example showing that the word δαίμων, which is a synonym of δαιμόνιον can be interchangeable with "god" and so it is regarded as a neutral connotation and object of invocation:

I exhort you, daimon of the dead...image of the gods, to hear / my request and to avenge me, Neilammon, whom Tereus bore, because Etes has brought a charge against me....And I exhort you not to listen to those who have brought charges against us....I ask you, daimon of the dead, not to listen to them [but to] listen [only] to me, Neilammon, [since I am] / pious [toward the] gods, [and to cause them to be] ill for their [whole] life. (PGM I. 1-27)<sup>569</sup>

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<sup>567</sup> Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 27, 117-22. Ancestor worship or worship of household gods are common for maintaining the identity of the family. See also Beard, North and Price, *Religions of Rome: A History*, 1: 87.

<sup>568</sup> Rives, *Religion in the Roman Empire*, 16 (in Text Box 1.1), 18.

<sup>569</sup> The English translation is from Hans Dieter Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, including the Demotic Spells* (2d ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 283. See also PGM I. 42-195; II.1-64.

By evoking the OT in Deut 32:17, Ps 95:5 and Bar 4:7 in 10:20, Paul induces a negative connotation to the term “demons” and defines them as the enemies of God. Similarly, by setting up an antithesis of “demons” and the “Lord” in 10:21-22, Paul subverts the association of demons from reverence of the deceased / normal invocation of gods to a provocative act of the Lord to jealousy.<sup>570</sup>

## 6.6 Conclusion

Paul mentions “Lord” or “Christ” many times in 1 Cor 5:1-11:1 when he discusses different issues. Christ language frequently serves to define the core values of Christ-followers which are radically subversive to the values of the social norm (except the “Lord” language in 1 Cor 9). While the echoes of Scripture function negatively as a critique against the cultural values, Christ language functions positively as establishing alternative values Christ-followers should uphold. These include:

- a) Christ as a milestone of the critical changes of the lives of insiders (1 Cor 5);
- b) Christ as the “Christ Land” to which insiders have immigrated, entailing changes of social practice (1 Cor 6);
- c) Christ as defining the undivided devotion of insiders in their marriages and in any social location (1 Cor 7);

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<sup>570</sup> For a classic counter-cultural reading of 1 Cor 10:14-11:1 based on sacramental interpretation: Paul’s concept of spirit and sacrament counter against the spirit and sacrament of his time in the Hellenistic world and Jewish legalism, see Hans Freiherr von Soden, “Sakrament und Ethik bei Paulus: Zur Frage der literarischen und theologischen Einheitlichkeit von 1 Kor. 8-10,” in *Urchristentum und Geschichte Gesammelte Aufsätze und Vorträge* (H. von Campenhausen ed.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1951), I: 239-75.

- d) Christ as the core of the gospel (1 Cor 8:6) in whom insiders believe and the common ground of existence of both knowers and the weak (1 Cor 8);
- e) Christ as the mission of insiders as well as the controlling principle of insiders to achieve the mission (1 Cor 9);
- f) Christ as the moving company of insiders and their exclusive covenant relation to the divine (1 Cor 10).

In other words, while the inter-textual echoes of the scriptures address mainly boundary-setting issues like “what the Christian community is not...”, Paul uses Christ language mainly to respond to the question “what the Christian community is.” Christ language informs the insiders’ distinctive core values which they should uphold and which are to be embodied in their moral behaviours and daily social lives. These Christ-defined values are key motivations for insiders to keep contact with outsiders and transform them to become “us.” Christ language in 1 Cor 5-11:1 is Christo-social.

The mission of the Christian community in 1 Cor 9 is a crucial disproof of the notion of the sectarian Christian community advocated by Wayne Meeks.<sup>571</sup> The metaphorical meaning of the phrase “in Christ” in 1 Cor 1 reminds us of Christ as an ongoing bridge between the church and the outside social world. The mission of preaching the gospel serves as a strong motivation to insiders to maintain social contacts (5:9-10) or existing social relations with outsiders (7:16-17; 9:19-23; 10:33), although this group-society relation may be in tension resulting from radically opposite values upheld by the church against some common social

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<sup>571</sup> Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 77-110. For a more comprehensive rebuke against the sectarian model for the church as well as Jewish groups, see Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 191-212.

practices in the public space. This tension or offensiveness is not necessarily destructive but these opposite values towards sex, marriage and cultic meals upheld by the Christian community and defined by Christ could function like a magnet attracting outsiders, because these options are uniquely offered by Christ. For instance, when outsiders are tired of the temporal and insecure nature of their marriage, they may be attracted by the Christian couples living out the Christian model of marriage in 1 Cor 7.

The final command “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” is Paul’s exhortation to the audience for a total transformation of their social values into alignment with their new identity defined by Jesus Christ. In addition to the theme of standing against the stream, this theme of Christ-defined values further links 1 Cor 5—11:1 together and confirms its design as one literary unity. The rhetorical purpose of Christ language in group-society relations further completes the inner logic, intratextual echoes and coherence of these six chapters.

## **Excursus 5      Is Paul Anti-Imperial?**

There has been much debate about whether Paul’s teachings are intended for making anti-imperial claims. Representative articles that advocate an anti-imperial reading in Pauline letters are collected in the three books edited by Richard Horsley.<sup>572</sup> For a systematic

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<sup>572</sup> *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997); *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000); *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2004). Besides, see N. T. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 59-79; John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed, *In Search of Paul: How Jesus’s Apostle Opposed Rome’s Empire with God’s Kingdom* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2005).

critique of the anti-imperial reading of Paul, see Christopher Bryan's *Render to Caesar*<sup>573</sup> and Seyoon Kim's *Christ and Caesar*.<sup>574</sup> The discussion will go on.

From my research on the new interpretation of 1 Cor 5-11:1, I observe *that there are themes which are anti-imperial cults but not any theme which is against the imperial order of the Roman Empire*. Paul objects to cults in general which thank gods, including Caesar, for their material blessings. However, Paul does not object to the imperial rule as such. For instance, in the issue of sexual immorality, Paul stands with the Roman Law to combat the sexual immorality, in particular open marriage, prevalent in the society. Caesar Augustus established the adultery law and tried to regulate marriage among elites to promote procreation. This ethical aim coincides with Paul's agenda in 1 Cor 7, though with different reasons. Caesar Augustus also sent the poet Ovid to exile because of the promiscuity promoted in his poems. Paul may welcome this empiric policy which addresses the problems of sexual immorality in the society. On the other hand, those new social values proposed by Paul to insiders are strange but not threatening from the perspective of the ruler of the Roman Empire. If Caesar had read 1 Corinthians, he would have regarded the Corinthian church as yet another minority group which demanded allegiance and exclusive loyalties to the association, much like other unofficial associations devoted to Zeus Hypsistos in Egypt or Judean (Jewish) associations.<sup>575</sup>

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<sup>573</sup> Christopher Bryan, *Render to Caesar: Jesus, The Early Church, and the Roman Superpower* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), 77-93.

<sup>574</sup> Seyoon Kim, *Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 3-71.

<sup>575</sup> Harland, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations*, 183. See also Philip Harland, *Dynamics of Identity in the World of the Early Christians* (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 1, 182.

Paul engages with the social values popular among ordinary city people, not the political policy or agendas of Imperial rule. This is my major dissent from Richard Horsley's notion of an alternative society in the Corinthian church. Paul's instructions for the internal discipline against the errant Christian in 1 Cor 5 and settlement of civil disputes between brothers in 1 Cor 6 are not illustrations of embodiment of the future anticipated society in the eschaton to the present world, as Horsley suggests.<sup>576</sup> Otherwise, Paul would have "cashed out" the prophesy "the saints will judge the world" in Dan 7 echoed in 1 Cor 6:2 and urged the Corinthian assembly to judge outsiders now. But Paul has no intention to urge the Corinthians to judge the world but emphasises that it is God, not us, who judges outsiders (5:12-13a). The judgment cases in 1 Cor 5 and 6 are not related to self-government<sup>577</sup> but rather the demonstration of a "community of new lump" which has cleansed out the sin-embracing attitude: a community that should be responsive to sinning insiders and should seek impartial justice rather than biased favouritism for their unrighteous gain. Similarly, Paul objects to the Corinthians participating in idol meals in 1 Cor 8-11:1 but not all social meals. Even though sex entertainment was quite commonly found in private banquets, Paul does not prohibit them from joining the banquets but only warns them against committing sexual immorality and visiting prostitutes in 1 Cor 5-7:1. Similarly, Paul still encourages them to attend social meals when invited by friends or family members (10:27). There are still social meals that are not idol meals. Again, Paul's objection to attending idol meals in 1 Cor 8-11:1 cannot be regarded as an exclusive alternative independent community to the

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<sup>576</sup> Richard Horsley, "Paul's Assembly in Corinth: An Alternative Society," in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth*, 371-95. [p.388]

<sup>577</sup> *Contra* Horsley, "1 Corinthians: A Case Study of Paul's Assembly as an Alternative Society," in *Paul and Empire*, 242-52. [pp.245-7, 249]

dominant society.<sup>578</sup> His emphasis is not on social isolation of the church from the society.<sup>579</sup> Rather, Paul intends the insiders' new values to be embodied and observable in their ordinary social intercourse with outsiders. The distinctive social values of insiders and "Christ" the in-between bridge are keys for the church keeping social relations with and saving outsiders (see section 6.1). Paul still instructs the insiders to maintain and have mission hope within their existing mixed marriages (7:15b-16). He still instructs the slaves or freedman to remain in the workplace (see section 6.4.2). In sum, Paul is a cultural critic, *not* a political critic *or* political ideologist, although political and cultural issues were closely related in the first century Mediterranean world.

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<sup>578</sup> *Contra* Horsley, "1 Corinthians: A Case Study of Paul's Assembly as an Alternative Society," 247-9.

<sup>579</sup> Horsley also admits that " [t]hat did not mean completely shutting themselves off from the society in which they lived. The purpose of the mission, of course, was to bring people into the community." See Horsley, "1 Corinthians: A Case Study of Paul's Assembly as an Alternative Society," 245. However, his insistence on the independence of the church over against the dominant society in the ensuing exegesis on 1 Cor 8—11:1 inevitably brings this conclusion of social isolation of the church from the world that he seeks to deny. For instance, "Paul's prohibition of the Corinthians' eating of 'food sacrificed to idols' ...*cut the Corinthians off* from participation in the fundamental forms of social relations in the dominant society. [italics mine]" (p.247)

# Chapter 7

## Conclusion

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Throughout 1 Cor 5-11:1, Paul has consistently indoctrinated new values for the audience to uphold which are against the main stream of social values in the surrounding society. Paul does not engage in issues of internal schism per se, but rather in the distinctive values insiders should uphold so as to be recognisable by outsiders in their everyday social lives. These are the ways that Paul differentiates insiders from outsiders and those new values are mainly based on Scripture and the implications of the new social identity of the church defined by Jesus Christ. These are big challenges to the insiders since putting these new values into practice suggests that they have to make critical changes in their social lives. This is my conclusion of this new interpretation of 1 Cor 5-11:1.

This new interpretation results from taking into consideration the Jewish tradition inherited by Paul as well as the social context of the audience. Below is a summary of what I have done:

In chapter 1 I have presented recent literature which has attempted to find the coherence and thematic unity of parts of 1 Cor 5—11:1. Although there are limitations in each study, they do come to two common conclusions:

1. 1 Cor 5-7 and 1 Cor 8—11:1 are two coherent and united discourses;
2. Paul seeks to distinguish insiders from outsiders throughout 1 Cor 5-11:1.

I then take these two as working assumptions to further interpret 1 Cor 5-11:1 and aim at responding to three key questions which are inspired by the social identity theory of Henri Tajfel and labelling theory of Howard S. Becker:



- a) How does Paul identify and handle betraying insiders? Is there any parallel in the Jewish tradition inherited by Paul that explains the rationale of Paul?
- b) How does Paul differentiate insiders from outsiders? How will it be interpreted from the ears of the audience as related to their ordinary social lives and assumed social values?
- c) How does Paul self-categorise insiders? How does Paul define insiders in positive terms? How will it be understood by the audience in a way related to their ordinary social lives and assumed social values?

In chapter 2, I have demonstrated the literary integrity of 1 Cor 5-11:1. Based on the unity of 1 Cor 5-7 and 1 Cor 8-11:1, I have shown that a bracketing device “imitating me” is set at the beginning and end of 1 Cor 5-11:1, which shows Paul’s design of framing 1 Cor 5-11:1 as one discourse. Moreover, there are numerous linguistic parallels and thematic parallels between 1 Cor 5-7 and 1 Cor 8-11:1. They are literary signs that exist only within 1 Cor 5-11:1 in the whole of 1 Corinthians. Readers are supposed to read 1 Cor 8-11:1 in the light of what Paul has said in 1 Cor 5-7.

After establishing the literary unity of 1 Cor 5-11:1 and the intratextual echoes of 1 Cor 5-7 in 1 Cor 8-11:1, Paul’s satanic language in 1 Cor 5-11:1 is addressed. Paul mentions Satan/demons three times in 1 Corinthians (5:5; 7:5; 10:20-1) and both are mentioned in the context of warning insiders or punishing insiders against certain deviant behaviours. I then have conducted a research on Satan (chapter 3) in ancient Jewish literature: *Dead Sea Scrolls* and Pseudepigrapha that may share the same Jewish tradition of Paul. I conclude that there is a social function in naming the Satan/Belial. Satan functions as a baseline for insiders: once you cross this line, you betray your identity. In the light of this Jewish tradition about Satan, it explains well Paul’s rhetorical purpose of mentioning Satan. Satan is a symbol of the apostate insider. Once insiders cross the line, they should be treated like Satan by social

isolation. Yet, the crossing line events do not refer to wrong beliefs but to deviant behaviours: incest, casual sex and idolatrous practice. It further confirms Paul's purpose of differentiating insiders from outsiders in 1 Cor 5-11:1.

Chapters 4-6 are the main body of this paper. Once the boundary of the literary text is set (chapter 2) and the boundary baseline (Satan as apostate) between insiders and outsiders is established (chapter 3), I interpret 1 Cor 5-11:1 through a rhetorical analysis of echoes of Scripture and Paul's use of Christ language in the light of the social lives of the Corinthians. Paul substantiates new values by the scriptures and Christ language that are against the stream of social values assumed in society and also in the pre-converted past of his audience. There are at least ten social evaluations Paul has addressed throughout 1 Cor 5-11:1:

|   | Social Evaluations   | New Evaluations Induced by Paul   |
|---|--|---|
| Incestuous union with one's stepmother after his father is deceased | Though illegal, it is praiseworthy for it is a realisation of the ideal of romantic love that overcomes the traditional norm | Sexual Immorality that qualifies an apostate Insider  |
| Attitudes towards insiders listed in 5:11                           | Tolerated and respected  | Discipline sinning insiders by social isolation; the church should shame these sinning insiders |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Appeal to pagan judge to settle financial dispute | Normal procedure   | Not correct. Insiders should appeal to insiders to settle financial disputes   |
| Bribery and partial justice                       | Normal, respecting patrons over impartial justice  | Sinful; uphold impartial justice   |
| Casual sex represented by visiting prostitutes    | Normal; rights of men  | Sinful lasting union which breaks one's union with Christ  |
| Marriage  | Sexually open and temporal   | Sexually closed (fidelity) and life-long—no exceptional case for divorce   |
| Criteria of choosing spouse                       | It does not matter which gods the spouse worship   | Prefer to choose Christ-followers. Mixed marriage is permitted but not preferable. Marriage is to enable insiders to love the Lord |
| Idolatry  | All worship of gods is cultic worship and different approaches to the divine; no cultic worship is called "idolatry" | Cardinal sin   |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Idol meals  | A kind of social meal which maintains family and friendship ties, expressing civic honor and showing gratitude to patron Caesar | Idolatrous practice and violates insiders' confession of "One God, One Lord"—Christ is the only patron that deserves honour and glory in the meals attended by insiders |
| Attitudes towards people with different cultic practices. | Respect each other's different religious practice   | Mission to convert them to confess "One God, One Lord"; watch over weak insiders to keep them from committing idolatry  |

This study has offered new insights into the study of 1 Corinthians. First of all, I have shown the logic of Paul and the coherent theme of 1 Cor 5-11:1 that is seldom found in commentaries and monographs about 1 Corinthians. For instance, the "apparent" contradiction between 1 Cor 6:12-20 and 1 Cor 7:14 raised by Dale Martin at the beginning of INTRODUCTION can be resolved. Paul's NO against visiting prostitutes in 1 Cor 6 and YES to maintain existing mixed marriage in 1 Cor 7 are based on the same new value: sexual intercourse entails life-long consequences and licit sexual relations is confined to the marriage relationship (1 Cor 7:2-9). Paul is not concerned about ritual impurity or pollution but rather *the lasting consequence of moral impurity* resulted from sexual sin (1 Cor 6:12-20) as well as the potential adultery resulting from divorce (1 Cor 7:10-16). The unbelieving spouse and the children are sanctified (not saved) because the marriage and licit sexual relationship are acceptable to Yahweh according to Gen 2:24. Once Martin's ideology of body or political

imagery about the corporate body is laid aside and the interpreter sticks to the rhetorical purpose of Paul and the OT echoes underlying the texts, the logic is apparent and the Pauline texts becomes sensible.

Since the work of Margaret Mary Mitchell, the rhetorical purpose for the unity of the church has become an accepted overarching theme of 1 Corinthians. However, I do not endorse this view. Contrary to Mitchell's interpretation, neither the errant Christian nor the issue of idol meal creates any divisiveness within the Christian community.<sup>580</sup> I stand with scholars like Alister Scott May and Alex Cheung to challenge any interpretation that superimposes the theme for the unity of church in 1 Cor 5-11:1. According to my rhetorical analysis, factionalism is not found in 1 Cor 5-11:1. I do not find any evidence that Paul is addressing the disunity of the Corinthian church. On the contrary, the whole Corinthian church seems to have united in keeping the "leaven" from their pre-converted past so that they overlook or even boast about certain sinful behaviours. This sin-embracing attitude creates tension between their actual practice and Paul's teachings of normative Christian life. Paul's rhetorical aim is to cleanse out this contagious sin-embracing "leaven" from the church. The assumption of the theme of church unity obscures the logic of Paul rather than illuminating it. This may provide a new perspective on reading the whole letter of 1 Corinthians, just as recent scholarship has contributed to interpreting the epistle to Romans beyond the shadow of "justification by faith."

Secondly, this study may encourage future studies on the interaction of the Corinthian church with the outside world rather than internal issues between different imaginary subgroups within the Corinthian church. In terms of group-society relation, Paul in 1 Corinthians does not emphasise the position of appeasing outsiders. He consistently reminds

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<sup>580</sup> Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 112, 126-7.

the church of being critical towards the values and ideologies embedded in the culture. He re-socialises the new Christ-follower group through transforming their core values and highlighting Christ at the centre of their social space. This critical analysis of Paul's rhetoric against the prevailing social values may prevent interpreters from confusing the Corinthians' perspective with Paul's. It is particularly true on the issue of divorce. If the readers observe the critical distance between Paul's perspective and the social ethos in the Roman Corinth, they may identify Paul's resolute rejection of divorce rather than permission to it (under certain circumstances) in 1 Cor 7:15. While Paul does not indicate wholesale rejection of any goodness or virtue promoted in the social ethos, he takes a critical stance towards it and urges the Christ followers to carefully evaluate those ideals in the light of their new identity in Christ.

Moreover, this counter-cultural agenda of Paul may not be just confined to 1 Cor 5-11:1. In re-interpreting 1 Cor 1-4, Corin Mihaila comes to a similar conclusion as mine about Paul's re-socialisation of the church through changing dominant cultural values:

In light of these social values prevalent in the Corinthian society, it is not hard to see how the Corinthian Christians, upon their conversion, brought the same values into the church....Faced with such a situation, Paul insists on a re-socialization of the Christians which consisted in a change of values. This he does by means of reminding the Corinthians of the centrality of the cross. The cross, as a symbol of 'weakness' and 'shame', challenges the Corinthians' thirst for status and honor.<sup>581</sup>

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<sup>581</sup> Corin Mihaila, *Paul-Apollos Relationship and Paul's Stance toward Greco-Roman Rhetoric: An Exegetical and Socio-historical Study of 1 Corinthians 1-4* (LNTS 402; London: T & T Clark International, 2009), 1-2. See also Bruce W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among the Sophists*, who argues for Paul's critique against the Sophist movement emerged from the elites which is parallel to Philo's critique against the Sophist movement in Roman Egypt.

Thus, further investigation into the interaction of the whole letter 1 Corinthians with the social values in Roman Corinth may be fruitful not only to our understanding of this letter but also to the significance of various beliefs about Christ in the development of early Christianity.<sup>582</sup>

Thirdly, if the letter addresses the social world outside the Corinthian church, this study of interpretation shows the significance of the social context of the audience. The social context does not simply serve as a background for reference. The dominant value of honour and shame in the Mediterranean world, the common social relations like patron and client, family kinship and non-kinship, the rich and the poor, men and women, adults and children, elites and peasants, the group-society relation, and the public lives including social meals, funerals, festivals, weddings, games and entertainment, craftsman works and trade, social activities in various voluntary associations, etc. are significant matrices for us to interpret Paul's letters, for they were written to people in urban cities. Although the sectarian model of the church proposed by Wayne Meeks is deemed problematic, he has pointed out a right direction of using sociological tools for biblical interpretation, especially in the study of the Pauline corpus. The perspective of the first audience who were living in an urban city may be a point of contact for modern readers living in urban cities to share the impact and offensiveness of Paul's letters. However, there is one limitation in this study: I have not taken the mutually equal friendship relationship into account in the process of interpreting 1

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<sup>582</sup> To the best of my knowledge, there is only one monograph which seeks to interpret the whole of 1 Corinthians with an overarching theme from an approach of social analysis of the Corinthian community : Mark T. Finney, *Honour and Conflict in the Ancient World: 1 Corinthians in its Greco-Roman Social Setting* (LNTS 460; London: T & T Clark International, 2011). He argues that Paul tackles the social value *φιλοτιμία* prevalent in the church and seeks to replace it with *φιλαδελφία* throughout 1 Corinthians. I wish I could have read it at the beginning of my research. Thanks to the generosity of Dr. Finney, who was willing to lend this work to me right after publication in December, 2011, I was able to incorporate his work within this conclusion.

Corinthians. This is another dimension that may enhance our understanding of Paul's concept of mutual service in marriage and in brotherly love between insiders.

Finally, this study has revealed the significance of Scripture in understanding the logic of Paul's letters. Paul appeals to the scriptures not only for upholding his ethics but also for his theological ideals and the implicit logic of his arguments. Paul's echoes of Deut 6 in 1 Cor 8 have implicitly revealed the jealousy of their Lord; the echoes of Passover meal in 1 Cor 5:7 have revealed the high price Jesus Christ has paid for their sins (6:20; 7:23) and the radical changes he expects in the renewal of mind in his believers (5:7-8). While Rosner's *Paul, Scripture, and Ethics* reveals Paul's indebtedness to Scripture for his ethical teachings, the present study reveals Paul's indebtedness to Scripture for his Christology and rhetoric. The inner logic of Paul can be found in the context of the scriptures quoted and echoed by Paul. Moreover, I have observed that numerous classic OT stories are embedded in Paul's rhetorical arguments. Thus, further studies on the echoes of the OT stories (e.g. Joseph in the Book of Genesis, the incestuous union of Bilhah and Reuben, Solomon's impartial judgment and the story of Daniel) in Paul's letters may be illuminating, just as the wilderness story of the Israelites has offered me new insights into the present study. As a result, Paul's letters can be read in a more interesting way: letters of story-telling.



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